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**‘Refugee’ is only a word: A discursive analysis of  
refugees’ and asylum seekers’ experiences in Scotland**

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**PhD**

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## **Declaration**

I, Steven Michael Kirkwood, declare that this thesis has been composed by me and that this is my own work, except as specified. I further declare that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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## **Abstract**

Although the United Kingdom is committed to the protection of refugees and the integration of migrants into society, many aspects of the asylum system actually prevent access to refuge or create barriers to integration. Extant research on this topic has often paid little attention to the role of discourse in legitimising particular asylum policies and notions of integration or has otherwise neglected the social functions of asylum seeker and refugee discourse. This thesis addressed these gaps by exploring the discourse of majority group members and asylum seekers / refugees, paying attention to the relationship between place and identity and the ways that notions of intercultural contact were constructed. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with seventeen people who work to support asylum seekers and refugees, fifteen asylum seekers / refugees and thirteen Scottish locals who reside in the areas where asylum seekers are housed. The data were analysed using discourse analysis, focusing on the ways that particular narratives and descriptions function to justify or criticise certain policies or sets of social relations.

The analysis illustrated that the presence of asylum seekers could be justified through portraying their countries of origin as dangerous and the host society as problem-free, whereas the presence of asylum seekers was resisted through portraying the host society as ‘full’. When discussing antagonism towards asylum seekers, interviewees constructed this as stemming from ‘ignorance’, which functioned to portray the behaviour as unwarranted while emphasising the potential for positive social change. Similarly, asylum seekers’ and refugees’ accounts of violence tended to deny or downplay racial motivation, or produce accusations of racism in a tentative or reluctant manner, implying that a ‘taboo’ on racial accusations exists even in cases of violence. The analysis also illustrated how constructions of ‘integration’ perform social actions, such as highlighting the responsibility of asylum seekers or the host society. The analysis showed how the refugee status determination process could be criticised through references to a ‘culture of disbelief’, claims that it was racist or portrayals of cultural differences that undermine the process. The right of asylum seekers to work was

advocated through portraying it as consistent with the national interest. Aspects of the asylum system related to destitution, detention and deportation were criticised through portraying them as ‘tools’ that treated asylum seekers inhumanely and by constructing asylum seekers in humane ways such as ‘families’ or as ‘human’.

Overall the results illustrated that, in the context of asylum seekers, notions of identity and place are linked so that constructions of place constitute identity, in the sense of portraying people as legitimately in need of refuge, and these constructions can work to justify or criticise asylum policies. Results also illustrated that victims of seemingly racist violence may construct their accounts in ways that deny or downplay racial motivations, making racist behaviour difficult to identify and challenge. The analyses suggested that ‘two-way’ constructions of integration may function to overcome the view that asylum seekers have ‘special privileges’ over other members of the community and emphasise the responsibilities of the host society. Portraying punitive asylum policies as ‘inhumane’, and constructing asylum seekers in humane ways, provides a potential strategy for reforming aspects of the asylum system.

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# Table of contents

Title page .....	i
Declaration.....	iii
Abstract.....	v
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Table of contents .....	ix
Introduction .....	1
Ch. 1. Literature review .....	5
The history and politics of asylum in the UK.....	6
Integration of asylum seekers and refugees.....	12
Integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland .....	17
Racism and refugees in majority group discourse.....	20
Refugee and asylum seeker discourse .....	30
Conclusions.....	36
Ch. 2. Methodology.....	39
General discursive approach.....	39
The interview data .....	43
Analytic strategies .....	52
Summary.....	58
Ch. 3. The presence of asylum seekers and refugees.....	61
Places of danger and safety .....	62
Places that benefit from asylum seekers.....	77
Places that are unable to support asylum seekers .....	87
Conclusions.....	96
Ch. 4. Relationships with the local population.....	101
Public perception and the media .....	103
Racism and violence .....	118
Integration .....	132
Conclusions.....	152
Ch. 5. The asylum system .....	157
The refugee status determination process .....	159
The right of asylum seekers to work.....	172
Destitution, detention and deportation .....	189
Conclusions.....	205

Ch. 6. Discussion.....	211
Summary of main results .....	211
Implications .....	217
Applications.....	219
Limitations.....	226
Future research.....	228
Reflections .....	230
Conclusions .....	232
References .....	233
Appendix A: Information and consent form for professionals .....	245
Appendix B: Information and consent form for refugees and asylum seekers .....	248
Appendix C: Information and consent form for Scottish locals.....	251
Appendix D: Background of professional interviewees .....	254
Appendix E: Background of refugee and asylum seeker interviewees .....	255
Appendix F: Background of Scottish local interviewees .....	256
Appendix G: Transcription symbols .....	257

## Introduction

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The movement of people around the world has played a major part in world history and continues to be an integral aspect of contemporary life. Although globalisation has led to the freer movement of goods and capital across national borders, the same cannot be said in terms of the movement of people, especially those from developing countries. While citizens of the European Union have received easier access to live and work in other European countries in recent years, this has coincided with the strengthening of border controls for those attempting to enter European countries from other parts of the world. Moreover, the leaders of some European countries that embraced multiculturalism over recent decades have more recently started to question multicultural policies, bringing greater attention to the alleged lack of integration experienced by members of minority ethnic groups.

Despite greater restrictions on immigration and increased emphasis on attracting only 'highly skilled' migrants, these countries remain committed, in principle at least, to the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees. This offers the opportunity for people fleeing persecution to access refuge in other countries. However, it is difficult for many people to enter such countries in order to avail themselves of this protection and, even when they do gain access, they may struggle to provide the evidence required to gain refugee status. Furthermore, during the asylum process they may be subject to a

range of policies and procedures that limit their ability to integrate into the host society, such as being housed in deprived neighbourhoods, being prevented from working and being subject to detention. The public perception of asylum seekers is often ambivalent at best, hostile at worst, and may serve to create further difficulties for people, even if they are granted refugee status. The experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in host societies is therefore a topic worthy of investigation, particularly due to the apparent contradictions between the will to provide shelter to those in need and the motivations to prevent people from developing countries from entering and settling in these countries.

The United Kingdom has a history of accepting people fleeing persecution that stretches back well before the conception of the Geneva Convention. Since 2001, this has involved ‘dispersing’ asylum applicants to a number of cities within the UK that have been funded to house and support them. In Scotland, the city of Glasgow became one such dispersal site. This thesis focuses on Scotland, particularly Glasgow, as this presents an interesting case study in relation to the integration of refugees and asylum seekers. In particular, the Scottish Government has appeared to have a more progressive approach to the integration of asylum seekers than policy makers in England, which creates interesting tensions as asylum policy is generally governed by the UK Home Office, yet the Scottish Government and Scottish local authorities are responsible for certain aspects relating to the support of asylum seekers in Scotland.

There has been a reasonable amount of research on refugees, asylum seekers and integration in recent years. However, much of this research has been limited for one of three main reasons. Firstly, much of the research has relied on quantitative methods, which limit its ability to investigate the meanings that people attribute to notions of integration. Secondly, much of the qualitative research on this topic has failed to pay sufficient attention to the social functions that are performed by people’s accounts of integration, such as the way that such accounts manage issues of blame, justification and responsibility. Thirdly, much of the discursive research on this topic has focused on political and media discourse, often failing to include the views of asylum seekers and refugees themselves or to focus on how notions of integration are conceived at the community level. This thesis attempts to address the gap in this literature by undertaking

a discursive analysis of interviews with asylum seekers and refugees, those who work to support asylum seekers and refugees, and those who live in the areas where asylum seekers tend to be housed.

The first chapter of this thesis contains a review of relevant research and theory. In particular, this covers research on the political context of asylum, the ways in which integration has been conceived and some of the findings of research on integration in Scotland and the UK. The chapter then involves a critique of past research on integration, arguing for the usefulness of discursive approaches, and covering some of the key findings of such research. The review of the literature concludes by highlighting the key gaps in the field, arguing that further discursive research is needed to explore the discourses relating to asylum seekers, refugees and their experiences in host societies.

Chapter two presents the methods used for this thesis. In particular, it explains that it is important to take a discursive approach to social psychological research – that is, treating language as socially constructive of reality and as performing a range of social functions – rather than treating language simply as a neutral representation of reality. This chapter explains that qualitative interviews will provide appropriate data for analysing the way that people construct notions relating to asylum seekers and refugees and explains how the data were gathered and transcribed. The chapter then describes the strategies used for analysing the data and defines a number of relevant analytic concepts.

Chapter three is the first empirical chapter and focuses on arguments relating to the presence of asylum seekers and refugees in the host society. More specifically, this chapter explores the relationship between notions of place and identity in such discourse. It illustrates that notions of place are constitutive of identity in the sense that particular constructions of place may constitute asylum seekers and refugees as having or not having a legitimate place in the host society.

Chapter four focuses on discourse relating to relations between asylum seekers, refugees and other members of the host society. In particular, it analyses accounts of antagonism towards asylum seekers and refugees, asylum seekers and refugees' accounts of being victims of racism and violence, and constructions of integration. The analyses illustrate the way that these accounts manage issues of blame and

responsibility, highlighting particular difficulties for asylum seekers and refugees to produce accusations of racism, even when subject to violence, and the way that ‘two-way’ constructions of integration can place responsibility on the host society.

Chapter five, the final empirical chapter, focuses on discourse relating to the asylum system itself and particularly to the way that such discourse functions to position various agents in particular ways. This chapter focuses on aspects of the asylum system relating to the refugee status determination process, the right of asylum seekers to work, destitution, detention and deportation. In particular, the analyses illustrate a ‘struggle’ over the discursive construction of certain aspects of the asylum system as humane or inhumane ‘tools’ that treat asylum seekers as objects. The analyses illustrate that many of the accounts criticise certain aspects of the asylum system through constructing them as inhumane and through portraying asylum seekers in humane ways.

The final chapter of this thesis draws together the conclusions, relates these back to previous research and theory, highlights the theoretical implications and practical applications, discusses limitations and avenues for future research, and presents some reflections on the research process. In particular, this section highlights the implications of the findings in terms of understanding the relationship between place and identity, discusses some of the issues around making accusations of racism, even in cases of violence, and makes suggestions relating to the reformation of the asylum system.

## Ch. 1. Literature review

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*It is only in the spirit that we desire to save ALL whom we can reach that we can even undertake action that will save any.*

-Reverend Dr James Parkes (1943) from an unpublished article (cited in Kushner & Knox, 1999, p. 199)

The scale of international conflict and the forced migration of people over the last hundred or so years has led some commentators to describe the twentieth century as having been defined by refugee movements (Kushner & Knox, 1999). When people flee their own countries and move to other parts of the globe, this will inevitably affect them as well as change both their countries of origin and the societies in which they come to reside. Although many countries have policies and structures in place to receive refugees, the public perception has often been characterised by ambivalence or outright hostility, including towards groups that are now considered to be quintessentially legitimate refugees, such as Jewish people fleeing the Holocaust (Kushner, 2006). The way in which refugees are portrayed will have intimate links to policies and practices in relation to their reception as well as the way they are treated by general members of the local population. This thesis will therefore focus on the ways in which refugees are portrayed, by refugees themselves as well as local people living in the receiving society, and explore the potential consequences for policy and social relations.



## The history and politics of asylum in the UK

People fleeing persecution have found refuge in the UK since at least the nineteenth century, although this practice was not given a formal legal structure until the development of the United Nations Geneva Convention of 1951 relating to the Status of Refugees (Kushner & Knox, 1999). The 1951 Convention defines a refugee as someone who:

owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2007, p. 16)<sup>1</sup>

It is worth noting that the term ‘asylum seeker’ is not used within the Convention, but within UK legislation, as well as more widely, it is defined as someone who has submitted an application for refugee status, the outcome of which has yet to be determined (e.g., UK Parliament, 1999). It has been argued that the context of the Cold War played an important role in the creation of this Convention, in that every person who fled the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (which was not a signatory) to Western nations, particularly the United States, was treated as an indication of the superiority of capitalist democracy over communism (e.g., Westin, 1999; Boswell, 2005). Schuster (2003, p. 100) stated that this has resulted in a system that privileges those persecuted in terms of civil and political rights (that is, those freedoms valued by the West) rather than economic and social rights (that is, those freedoms privileged by Soviet nations) so that many involuntary migrants are ineligible for protection under the Convention. Despite the limitations of the Convention, it has come to be an important basis for providing refuge to those fleeing persecution, with 148 nations currently signed up to the 1951

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<sup>1</sup> The 1951 Convention originally only applied to those who were made refugees due to circumstances prior to 1 January 1951; the United Nations 1967 Protocol relating to the status of refugees extended the definition to include those who became refugees after that date (UNHCR, 2007).

Convention and / or the related 1967 Protocol, and it has been described as the one piece of legislation that has saved the most lives in history (Yeo, 2011).

In terms of the global context, recent statistics show that there are 36.5 million people in the world who are 'of concern' to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2010). This includes 10.4 million refugees, 984,000 asylum seekers and 15.6 million internally displaced people. It has been estimated that nearly 1% of the world's total population is currently displaced by war (Burnett & Peel, 2001). Of all refugees, the vast majority are harboured within the world's poorest countries and it is estimated that only 5% are actually accepted into developed Western countries (Summerfield, 1999). Despite this, it is important to investigate the experiences of refugees in developed countries, as problems in integration may result in negative psychological effects as well as conflict within the host society more widely (Berry, 1997).

Although the UK was a signatory of the Refugee Convention and Protocol, it was not until the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993 that the Refugee Convention was cited in statute law (O'Sullivan, 2009). Since then, the UK Parliament has passed several pieces of legislation relating to asylum law, often intended to restrict the scope for people to apply for asylum. In addition, the UK Immigration Rules regulate the entry of people in the UK; where these are breached by UK officials, applicants may lodge appeals. Importantly, the European Convention on Human Rights was made a part of UK domestic law through the Human Rights Act 1998, and has relevance to asylum law in terms of prohibiting returning people to places where they risk torture, as well as articles relating to the use of detention and the right to family life.

All asylum applications are processed by the UK Border Agency and considered within three categories: 1) an asylum claim under the Refugee Convention; 2) a claim for humanitarian protection or discretionary leave; or 3) a human rights claim under the European Convention of Human Rights or the Human Rights Act 1998 (O'Sullivan, 2009). If an application is accepted, the applicant receives refugee status, which may provide them with five-year 'limited leave to remain' – and applicants may later apply for indefinite leave to remain – or they may receive five year Humanitarian Protection or

Discretionary Leave of no more than three years. If unsuccessful, an applicant may be able to appeal to the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal and then to the High Court, and in some cases to the House of Lords or the European Court of Human Rights.

Over the last ten years, the number of people applying for asylum annually in the UK rose from 46,015 in 1998, to a peak of 84,130 in 2002, and has since dropped to 24,485 in 2009 (Home Office, 2010). Since around 2000, the UK has been operating a policy of dispersal that requires asylum seekers in need of support to reside in specified locations around the country. Glasgow is the only such dispersal site in Scotland and at the end of 2009, 2,470 asylum seekers were housed there (Home Office, 2010).

Although recent statistics suggest that there are over 5,000 asylum seekers living in Scotland (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, 2007), other research has suggested that it is hard to determine the exact number, and it is estimated that over 10,000 asylum seekers and refugees live in Glasgow, most having arrived since 2000 (Wren, 2007).

Although dispersal was officially introduced in order to ‘spread the burden’ of accommodating and supporting asylum seekers, who were previously concentrated in the South East of England, the tendency to house asylum seekers in deprived areas has exacerbated social exclusion and put them at increased risk of being victims of racism and violence (Griffiths, Sigona & Zetter, 2006; O’Nions, 2010; Squire, 2009).

In terms of immigration policy more generally, the UK Labour Government of 1997 to 2010 officially advocated a multicultural society, stating that it encouraged immigrants who would make a positive contribution to British society to come to the UK, and provided asylum to those fleeing persecution, through the process of ‘managed migration’ (Young, 2003). This included ‘toughening’ the processes for those seeking asylum, ostensibly because so-called ‘economic migrants’ were masquerading as refugees in order to take advantage of the UK’s ‘soft’ approach on asylum seekers (Bagilhole, 2003). However, research, including some by the Home Office, suggests that this approach may be flawed, as very few asylum seekers are aware of specifics about the UK immigration system or benefit entitlements, and instead often choose to come to the UK due to having friends or relatives in the country and general beliefs about the UK being a safe and tolerant society, although many have no choice over their destination as

they rely on human smugglers (Gilbert & Koser, 2006; Robinson & Segrott, 2002). Moreover, policy initiatives such as the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, which was intended to reduce the number of immigrants into the UK, have been judged as a failure given that the number the asylum applicants decreased before the legislation was brought in and rose each of the three years following (Schuster, 2003). With regard to ‘toughening’ policies related to asylum, Bagilhole (2003, p. 17) stated that the Government’s role in the ‘moral panic surrounding the issue [was] both dangerous and damaging to race relations’. Despite these flaws and failures, the current UK Government, under the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition, seems set to continue attempts to ‘tighten’ the immigration system, aiming to bring annual net migration to the UK down to ‘tens of thousands’ rather than ‘hundreds of thousands’ (Cameron, 2011).

Many commentators have characterised the UK’s recent immigration and asylum policies as founded on a model of deterrence, based on the assumption that therefore only the most needy – and therefore the most likely to be genuine – would make the effort to apply (e.g., Bagilhole, 2003; Malloch & Stanley, 2005; Pearce & Stockdale, 2009; Phillips & Hardy, 1997; Wren, 2007; Zetter, 2007). In fact, it is almost impossible to enter the UK legally as an asylum seeker as visa requirements mean that it is necessary to attain false documents to enter the country, and the policy of fining airlines and other transport companies for carrying passengers with false documents makes it more difficult for asylum seekers and requires many to rely on human traffickers (Barsky, 2000; Burnett & Peel, 2001; Westin, 1999). Westin (1999, p. 39, emphasis in original) argued that this essentially means that ‘*access to the asylum procedures is blocked*’. Due to greater restrictions on immigration to the European Union, applying for asylum is one of the few methods for immigrating to the UK from less developed countries (Castles, Korac, Vasta & Vertovec, 2002). Those who arrive without appropriate documentation are treated as criminals, justifying the use of detention and expulsion, even though this increases the chances of imprisoning those who are legitimately in need of asylum and have all the likelihood of being victims of trauma and abuse themselves (Bosworth, 2008; Bracken & Gorst-Unsworth, 1991). The use of

illegal means of entry – often the only means of entry – may also increase the likelihood of refugees being perceived as economic migrants (Harding, 2000). Overall then these policies and practices are in opposition to the spirit of the 1951 Convention and effectively prevent many people from entering the UK and accessing protection from persecution.

In addition to ‘immigration’ policy – that is, the selection and admission of foreigners into a country – it is also important to consider ‘immigrant policy’ – that is, the provisions for immigrants in a country (Hammar, 1985). This distinction is particularly important when considering the Scottish context, as immigration policy is reserved to the UK Parliament whereas many issues related to the provision of resources to asylum seekers – such as education and health – are devolved to the Scottish Parliament. Although both the previous UK Labour Government (Home Office, 2002, 2008) and the current UK Conservative-Liberal Democrat Government (May, 2010) have stated that the integration of those coming into the UK is a policy objective, analysis of policy documents suggests this only applies to those whose claims have been successful (i.e., refugees) rather than those who are awaiting the outcome of their application for asylum (i.e., asylum seekers; Da Lomba, 2010). In contrast, the Scottish Government has tended to treat integration as starting from arrival (Scottish Executive, 2005), and as such provides greater access to resources for asylum seekers in some domains, notably in relation to education.

Currently, asylum seekers who require support are entitled to accommodation on a ‘no choice’ basis; they are provided with monetary support (currently just above 50% of income support for single adults); their electricity and gas bills are covered; children can and must attend school and they are provided with certain access to English language classes and other forms of education; but they are generally not permitted to access paid employment (Da Lomba, 2010). However, the introduction of limited forms of leave to remain, limited access to English classes and a view by the UK Government that integration does not begin until after an asylum claim has been successfully resolved all operate as barriers to integration (Da Lomba, 2010). This situation may be worsened as processes that ought to provide safety and protection to those fleeing persecution may

in fact be disruptive and traumatic to already traumatised individuals (Bosworth, 2008; Bracken & Gorst-Unsworth, 1991). In particular, it has been argued that the criminalisation and ‘othering’ of asylum seekers has intensified hostility among some sectors of the public and in policy and media discourse, and has justified policies that are detrimental to the integration of asylum seekers and refugees, such as the use of detention and the removal of the right to work for asylum seekers (Malloch & Stanley, 2005; Mulvey, 2010; Pickering, 2001; Smyth & Kum, 2010).

Of course, the opposing view could be treated as reasonable, for that is how it is generally presented. For instance, the UK Prime Minister and Home Secretary have argued that it is important to increase immigration controls in order to avoid the negative economic and social consequences that may result from large numbers of incoming migrants (Cameron, 2011; May, 2010). The Home Office (n.d.) has argued that asylum seekers are not allowed to work before their application is approved on the grounds that it is important to maintain a distinction between entering the UK in order to work and entering in order to access asylum. Even the detention and deportation of children have been justified on the grounds that such processes are important for limiting child trafficking (UKBA, 2010b). Often such arguments are couched in terms of national sovereignty in the sense that the government has a right and a responsibility to act in the interests of people of the nation (Every & Augoustinos, 2008a), which include preventing ‘unwanted’ others from entering the country as well as justifying the use of controls on those who reside in the country but do not have the status of citizens.

Clearly such arguments have a certain logic and rationale that work to make them acceptable to large numbers of the public and major political parties. However, these cannot be accepted uncritically. For instance, Carens (1987, 2000) has argued that such arguments are philosophically weak, even when considered through a variety of frameworks. In this regard, Singer (2002) has highlighted that ethical duties do not stop at a nation’s borders. More radically, Cohen, Grimsditch, Hayter, Hughes and Landau (2003) have argued that immigration controls constitute a form of structural discrimination and therefore they should be abolished. In line with some other discursive researchers and social psychologists (e.g., LeCouteur & Augoustinos, 2001; Lynn &

Lea, 2003), I take the view that social research should be motivated to change discriminatory practices and therefore this research will be critical of arguments that are supportive of oppressive policies.

This discussion of asylum policy in the UK highlights a complex series of tensions. For instance, the humanitarian gesture embedded in the Geneva Convention of 1951, of which the UK is a signatory, seems at odds with the barriers that work to keep people from entering the UK to apply for asylum. Hall (2008, p. 165) has described this as ‘a conflict between the aspirations to regulate entrance and provide asylum’. Moreover, the policy objective of integrating those who enter the UK appears to be undermined by the disruptive and perhaps punitive measures to which asylum seekers are often subjected, as well as the limitations placed on their engagement in society. These tensions are especially interesting given the different approaches of the UK Government compared with the Scottish Government, making Scotland a particularly intriguing site for further investigation. The next section moves on from this policy context to discuss relevant approaches to the study of refugees, asylum seekers and integration.

## **Integration of asylum seekers and refugees**

Integration is a complex concept with a variety of different definitions, and yet is an important and well-used term in relation to policies and practices related to the reception of asylum seekers and refugees. Castles et al. (2002) undertook a detailed survey of research on the integration of immigrants and refugees on behalf of the Home Office in order to guide policy and practice. They suggested that discussions on integration involve asking questions regarding what happens when refugees come to the new society, the extent to which they can access work, education and employment, the relationships they build up with members of different ethnic groups, their level of participation in society and any barriers against participation (Castles et al., pp. 11-12). They highlighted that, while popular views suggest that integration is a one-way process, in the sense the newcomers must adapt to the host society, expert opinion suggests that

integration is a two-way process, in that the host society must also adapt to meet the needs of migrants. They stated:

Indeed, it is possible to argue that, in a multicultural society, integration may be understood as a process through which the whole population acquires civil, social, political, human and cultural rights, which creates the conditions for greater equality. (Castles et al., 2002, p. 12)

This conceptualisation of integration is interesting as it suggests a joint responsibility and opportunity for both refugees and members of the host society to increase positive relationships and participation in society.

Castles et al. (2002, p. 13) also suggested that integration may occur at different levels, and therefore it is important to ask: “‘integration into what’? Are we referring to integration into an existing ethnic minority, a local community, a social group, or British society?’ Due to the complex nature of this topic, the researchers suggested that qualitative methods have an important role to play. In particular, they suggested that research needs to investigate the views of asylum seekers and refugees, professionals who work with them and other members of the community, as well as examining the relationship between the asylum process and integration.

Castles et al. (2002, pp. 30-31) suggested the following indicators for integration: education, training and employment; social integration; health; legal integration; political integration; overall integration (including ‘personal assessments of satisfaction with one’s achievements and situation in the receiving society’). Following on from this work, Ager and Strang (2004a) were commissioned by the Home Office to develop a framework and indicators for integration for evaluating the work of projects that assist refugees in the UK. The authors outlined ten ‘domains’ in four categories:

Means and markers: Employment; Housing; Education; Health.

Social connections: Social bonds; Social bridges; Social links.

Facilitators: Language & cultural knowledge; Safety & stability.

Foundation: Rights and citizenship.



The second category draws on research and theory into social capital, which is constituted by the social resources available to a person through their formal and informal social networks, including family members, friends and work colleagues etc. (Coleman, 1988; Portes, 1998). Ager and Strang (2004a, p. 4) define the three domains as follows:

1. Social bonds (connections within a community defined by, for example, ethnic, national or religious identity);
2. Social bridges (with members of other communities); and
3. Social links (with institutions, including local and central government services).

This overall framework conceives of integration as a *process* as well as defining successful integration as *achievement* in the range of stated domains (Ager & Strang, 2008). The authors also pointed out that if this definition was applied to members of the host society it would inevitably highlight that not all members are ‘integrated’; however, they suggest that the benefits of integration are such that this is a goal that should be worked towards for all members (Ager & Strang, 2004a). This framework therefore functions as a sort of ‘ideal’ that can be used to guide service development and evaluation in terms of policies and practices directed at asylum seekers and refugees, although it holds the potential to be applied to general members of society as well.

In contrast to this approach, the acculturation framework (Berry, 1997) has tended to dominate recent research on the resettlement of migrants within social and cross-cultural psychology. A common definition of ‘acculturation’ is: ‘those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups’ (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936, p.149, as cited in Berry, 1997, p. 7). It is important to note that acculturation is not the same as assimilation, in the sense of one cultural group merely taking on the attributes of another. Rather it is a notion that allows for a variety of different strategies and outcomes in relation to such contact (Sam, 2006). More specifically, the acculturation approach posits that there are two main factors in relation to resettlement: the extent to which people maintain aspects of their

original culture and the extent to which they become involved in the new culture (Berry, 1997). This allows four overall acculturation strategies: integration (engagement with both cultures), separation (engagement with own culture only), assimilation (engagement with host culture only) and marginalisation (engagement with neither culture). Berry notes that the response and attitudes of the host culture will affect the choices open to the migrant group. For example, societies that encourage multiculturalism will facilitate integration whereas societies that are hostile towards migrants will make it more difficult for them to integrate. Research suggests that integration is generally the best strategy for the well-being of the migrant group (Berry, Poortinga, Breugelmans, Chasiotis & Sam, 2011) and Berry has pointed out that failure to integrate can have a negative impact on both the migrant group – in terms of poor psychological well-being – and for the host group – for example, in terms of conflict.

Castles et al. (2002, p. 16) were critical of the concept of acculturation and stated: ‘it seems to pre-suppose that the receiving society is mono-cultural and that immigrants have to give up their own ethnic group cultures’. In terms of the first point, Berry’s (1997) framework does seem to imply that the cultures of the host society and the migrant are relatively homogenous. In terms of the second point, Berry highlights that change can occur in either culture, yet he states that change is more likely to occur among migrants than within the host culture; as it stands, extant social psychological research on acculturation has focused on the adaptation of migrants to the host society rather than on cultural change within the host society or the development of new cultural forms (Berry et al., 2011). This may be related to the dominance of quantitative psychometric approaches to acculturation that focus on the individual level. In this regard, several researchers have suggested that future research needs to include a greater use of qualitative methods (Castles et al., 2002; Doná & Berry, 1999; Strang & Ager, 2010).

In terms of research on integration and refugees, evidence suggests that the degree of acceptance by members of the host communities, and the amount of support and opportunities provided in relation to employment, housing and resources etc., are likely to impact on refugees’ integration into the host community (Ahearn, Loughry &

Ager, 1999). However, Harrell-Bond (1999) highlighted that for many asylum seekers and refugees in Western countries, receiving assistance from countries of asylum may be the first time they have relied on state benefits; finding themselves alongside the unemployed, those with mental health issues or drug or alcohol addictions may adversely affect their views on themselves and their self-confidence and self-esteem. She explained that the logic of giving aid means that people may be forced into feeling obligated for any help that they receive, rather than seeing themselves as entitled to certain rights under international law. In turn, the provision of assistance and resources to refugees may provoke negative reactions from members of the local community if they feel this represents preferential treatment, particularly as asylum seekers are often housed in deprived neighbourhoods (Barclay, Bowes, Ferguson, Sim & Valenti, 2003; Wren, 2007). Summerfield (1999) has also argued that some forms of service provision may actually encourage dependence on services. The relationship between service provision, public perception and the integration of asylum seekers and refugees is therefore complex and warrants further exploration.

In terms of the public perception in the UK, research has found that attitudes towards asylum seekers and refugees are generally negative and often hostile (Lewis, 2005). Further research by Lewis (2006) suggests that public attitudes in Scotland towards asylum seekers and refugees may be more positive than in England, however these positive attitudes are only targeted towards those who are seen as 'genuine' and otherwise hostile views still exist, particularly in Glasgow. This context is likely to make it more difficult for asylum seekers and refugees to integrate in the UK.

Particularly due to legal barriers to asylum seekers working, but also due to other issues around language abilities, discrimination and the non-recognition of work experience and qualifications, many refugees have difficulty accessing suitable paid employment, which is also detrimental to integration more generally (Bloch, 2000; Brahmabhatt, Atfield, Irving, Lee & O'Toole, 2007). Similarly, research into the 'skills and aspirations' of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland found that they were often highly skilled and motivated, but that they tended to have difficulty finding paid employment or were working in jobs that were below their skill level (Charlaff, Ibrani,

Lowe, Marsden & Turney, 2004). Although asylum seekers are provided with accommodation, this is not without its problems, as many are housed in deprived neighbourhoods, sometimes with sub-standard housing (Phillips, 2006). Furthermore, some aspects of the asylum process can be detrimental to integration, such as long delays in receiving a resolution on asylum claims, which results in asylum seekers not having the security they require to fully engage and settle in the host society (Spicer, 2008). Based on this research, asylum seekers and refugees may face particular difficulties in terms of integration in the UK.

### **Integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland**

Some research has focused specifically on the situation of asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. For instance, Barclay et al. (2003) undertook a comprehensive study on this topic. Professional respondents said that the dispersal of asylum seekers to deprived areas caused some problems, particularly because they were seen to be receiving privileges over locals, negative community relations and pre-existing issues to do with the 'dislocation' within communities. In particular, asylum seekers were housed in void housing stock, often scheduled for demolition, in some of the most deprived areas of Glasgow. Due to the pre-existing issues in some of these areas, some of the professional interviewees questioned whether they could even be considered as communities. Most of the refugees interviewed had positive experiences of arrival and positive views of Glasgow, although some had negative views, including experiences of racism (including verbal abuse, vandalism, burglary and assault) and concern about the social problems in Glasgow (e.g., drugs, alcohol and unemployment). Many refugees reported feeling isolated and alone. Some asylum seekers commented on the importance of friendships in integration, although the authors suggested that this importance did not seem to be recognised by service providers. Some refugees felt they were becoming part of the local community, but often did not feel part of the wider community, and sometimes felt like outsiders. This was supported by research on asylum seekers in Edinburgh by Ager,

Malcolm, Sadollah and O'May (2002), who found that they tended to have few social connections with locals, even though this is what they desired.

A study by Wren (2007) on the role of multi-agency networks in supporting asylum seekers and refugees also emphasised that the use of housing in socially deprived areas, some of which was scheduled for demolition, highlighted the short-sightedness of the approach to integration despite the high recognition rates of asylum seekers in Glasgow. Furthermore, although the Audit Commission recommended that refugees should be clustered by language group, this did not happen, making it more difficult for them to form social networks. Support agencies were often concerned about the potential backlash for providing specific services for refugees, especially in deprived areas, due to the perception of 'preferential treatment' in the context of limited resources; however this could result in some of the unique needs of refugees not being met by the existing services. The study found that refugees often had good work experience and skills, and there was a skills shortage in Glasgow, yet asylum seekers were not allowed to work before their claim was settled. This, coupled with legislation that denies support to those who do not submit their asylum applications immediately upon arrival, increases the chances of destitution and creates barriers to integration, including the negative impact of inactivity and waiting times on self-confidence.

Further research by Bowes, Ferguson & Sim (2009) on the views and experiences of service providers, asylum seekers and refugees in Glasgow found that people had a complex mixture of good and bad experiences in terms of integration. For instance, many were generally positive regarding their local area although many had also experienced harassment from locals. A related study by Sim (2009) on the experiences of refugees in Glasgow found that some had made good social connections in the city and had developed an affinity with the place. Many noted that they struggled to find suitable employment, which has negative consequences in terms of integration. Although some considered relocating to England, often due to perceived job prospects, after living in Glasgow for several years and many having their children attend local schools, a number of refugees in the study expressed feeling part of the community.

Research by Mulvey (2011) resulted in similar findings, as most of the asylum seekers and refugees he surveyed were satisfied with their life in Scotland and happy with the neighbourhood they lived in, as well as most having good access to health care and education. However, many reported difficulties in accessing paid employment and most said they had been discriminated against while in Scotland. A qualitative study by Deuchar (2011) on the social capital of young refugees in Glasgow found that many of the refugees were able to develop bonding social capital (i.e., connections with other refugees or ethnic minority group members) but often bridging social capital (i.e., connections with young white Scottish people) was less evident, and the author explained that this was partly explained by issues of deprivation and prejudice in the local areas.

Although this research provides some useful and important information in relation to the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK, there are some limitations in terms of how the views of asylum seekers, refugees, professionals and members of the local population are treated as data. In this regard, Dixon and Durrheim (2000; Durrheim & Dixon, 2004, 2005) have drawn on developments in discourse analysis within psychology (e.g., Edwards, 1997; Edwards & Potter, 1992) to argue that research on intercultural contact needs to pay more attention to the functions of rhetoric, particularly as they relate to notions of place and identity. They suggested that it is important to investigate the way in which people discursively construct intercultural contact as this has implications for how such contact is experienced and understood, and that constructions constitute actions, in the sense that they can be used for the purpose of social functions, such as blaming, justifying and excluding.

Similarly, Bowskill, Lyons and Coyle (2007) argued that most extant research on acculturation has not paid enough attention to the different meanings that acculturation strategies have across different cultural contexts. Furthermore, they suggested that focusing on individual preferences for acculturation – usually focusing on members of minority groups – ignores the wider and political forces that shape intercultural contact, missing the ways in which ideas of acculturation are constructed and negotiated, running the risk of reifying particular acculturation strategies (see also Wilczek, Donnelly &

Freedman, 2009). A discursive approach to acculturation should therefore allow the exploration of people's understandings of intercultural contact in context to better understand how these shape the meaning and experience of intercultural contact. The next section outlines such an approach and critically discusses a range of relevant research, much of which stemmed from discursive work on racism.

It is worth mentioning that while there is no reason why discursive research on racism and on refugees must go hand in hand, in practice the two topics are closely intertwined. This relates to Wetherell and Potter's (1992) definition of racist discourse as that which legitimises and perpetuates the domination of one ethnic group over another (discussed in further detail in the next section). Furthermore, because the definition of a refugee is based on people crossing national boundaries (UNHCR, 2007), refugees and asylum seekers tend to constitute recognisable ethnic groups within the countries of asylum, making them potential targets for racism. The following section therefore discusses this research together and highlights the close links between studies on these topics.

### **Racism and refugees in majority group discourse**

Discourse analysis in psychology has emerged since the 1980s as an alternative to cognitive psychology, focusing on rhetoric and representation rather than thoughts and attitudes (Edwards, 1997; Edwards & Potter, 1993; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). This approach rests on the premise that language is not a neutral medium that describes the world, but rather is actively engaged in creating that world; i.e., language is constitutive of reality (Edwards & Potter, 1993). Potter and Wetherell (1987) argued that one of the problems with attitudinal research is that it assumes that the attitude can be separated from the object that is evaluated – instead, they suggest that different 'attitudes' involve different constructions of the object of that attitude. Furthermore, they argued that discourse fulfils a variety of social functions, such as allocating responsibility or legitimising a particular aspect of the social world.

To illustrate, Potter and Wetherell (1987) analysed discourse in which interviewees gave their views on the actions of violent protesters. They explained that in order to support the right to protest while opposing the actions of some protesters, the speakers 'split' individuals into good, genuine protesters and bad, violent protesters. Whereas mainstream social psychology views categorisation as the neutral performance of cognitive processes in relation to external stimuli, Potter and Wetherell explain that deploying categories is an accomplishment. Drawing on the work of Billig (1985), they highlighted that 'prejudice' cannot solely be the work of categorisation, but also involves particularisation. That is, if someone holds a strong, negative view on a certain group, they must also deal with evidence that goes against their views (i.e., make exceptions for members of the group who demonstrate positive traits). This demonstrates the importance of using qualitative methods in order to address the flexible ways in which people deploy categories and the links between objects and their evaluations.

Wetherell and Potter's (1992) study was the first large-scale application of discourse analysis to the study of racism within social psychology. They defined racist discourse to be that which legitimises and perpetuates the domination of one ethnic group over another. They explained that whereas many previous investigations of racism within social psychology focused on authoritarian aspects of personality or attitudes that underlay prejudice, the analysis of racist texts and talk can include combinations of both authoritarian and liberal elements (e.g., drawing on negative stereotypes of ethnic minority groups that justify their lower social position, yet arguing that indigenous rights claims have no legitimacy as all people should be treated equally). In their approach, discourse analytic approaches to racism should examine text and talk to investigate the subject positions that are constructed and taken up, the way that social groups and individuals are categorised and particularised, the content that is given to identity constructions, and the associated consequences of these constructions.

Rapley (2001) has highlighted that, in relation to the study of racism in particular, categorisation needs to be understood as an active process, rather than a mere response to an objective and already existing social reality, in order to hold people



morally accountable for their engagement with the world. He argued that it is not only important for moral reasons, but also empirical reasons, as the analysis of actual talk illustrates that people show an awareness that they will be held accountable for their categorisation of the social world and that they orientate their speech in ways that attend to their potential accountability. Through an analysis of political speeches on 'race' and indigenous rights, Rapley illustrated that ethnic groups, the speaker and other members of the nation may be categorised and constructed in ways that undermine indigenous rights and perpetuate inequality, while drawing on notions of equal treatment. Treating categorisations and identity constructions as social accomplishments allows an investigation of the specific ways in which they may perpetuate inequality while highlighting the moral dimension of these activities.

Similarly, LeCouteur and Augoustinos (2001) advocated applying discourse analysis to institutional and everyday talk and texts in order to investigate the ways in which categories and identities are used to maintain racism. For instance, the analysis of interviews with white Australians illustrated that the category 'Aboriginal' was treated as unproblematic when discussing the 'problems' associated with the indigenous people of Australia, yet this identity was problematised and questioned when discussing native land rights. Interviewees appealed to a national level identity – 'Australian' – in order to both undermine the legitimacy of native land rights and discount the specific location of indigenous Australians in relation to Australia's colonial history. This analysis illustrates the usefulness of discursively analysing texts and talk in order to understand, and ultimately challenge, ideologies and subject positions that perpetuate racism.

In his editorial introduction to the first issue of the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Zetter (1988) argued that labels play a crucial and complex role in terms of research, policy and practices related to refugees, thus highlighting the importance of discourse and categorisation. He has argued that these labels play an important role in relation to facilitating support to refugees, yet they can also play a negative role in terms of reinforcing dependency, stereotypes or segregation (Zetter, 1999). More recently he explained how labels such as 'illegal asylum seekers', 'bogus asylum seekers', 'economic refugee/asylum seeker' and 'illegal migrant' associate ideas of criminality

and marginality with refugees, undermining their right to enter or remain in the host country (Zetter, 2007, p. 184). He suggested that refugee labels are going through two seemingly contradictory processes: they are being *politicised* in *public* discourse while being treated as *apolitical* within *bureaucratic* discourse. A discursive approach may therefore be useful in exploring in detail how the way in which asylum seekers and refugees are constructed through language hold implications in terms of the functioning of the asylum system and the way asylum seekers and refugees are received in a host society.

Along these lines, Phillips and Hardy (1997) investigated how organisational discourse constructs both what a refugee is and who counts as a refugee. They suggested that the legal system primarily determines who is or is not a refugee, but that definitions over what a refugee is are subject to ‘discursive struggles’ among various relevant agencies. The authors explained that the category of ‘bogus asylum seekers’, who are considered ‘disguised economic migrants’, is constructed and perpetuated in order to sustain the refugee determination process; without their existence there would be no justification for such an expensive system. In turn, voluntary organisations that support refugees argued that it is misleading to describe asylum seekers as economic migrants, as this not only undermines refugees’ legitimate needs and increases suspicion, but it also undermines the legitimacy of refugee organisations, suggesting that they are not as needed because the group they serve is mostly ‘bogus’. The authors suggested that refugees are sometimes constructed as helpless, dependent and marginalised, for example in the way that displaced people may be portrayed through the media following a war. They argued that this construction works in favour of government asylum practices, as it promotes the idea that asylum seekers are likely to be a drain on the host society; the authors suggested that restrictive asylum policies would be less justified if refugees were seen as potentially valuable, contributing members of society.

In order to examine the public debate, Lynn and Lea (2003) analysed the discursive construction of asylum seekers in letters to the editor in British newspapers. They highlighted that arguments regarding asylum seekers are culturally and historically located and explained that their approach was ‘unashamedly political’ (Lynn & Lea,

2003, p. 431) in order to analyse the ways that discourses support oppressive practices, with the intention of resisting and challenging them. The analysis highlighted the ways that certain categories (e.g., bogus refugee, economic refugee) are used to argue that giving resources to asylum seekers is unfair to British citizens while portraying the writer as interested in equality and asylum seekers as greedy. Conversely, some writers highlighted the inhumane treatment of asylum seekers – who were portrayed as victims of torture at times – and challenged the official discourse by explaining that so-called ‘reception centres’ were in fact ‘detention centres’ with barbed wire fences. On a related point, Malloch and Stanley (2005) argued that discourses that associated asylum seekers with criminality work to justify tighter immigration controls for the purposes of security and control, the use of detention centres and segregation, and has negative consequences in terms of the integration of refugees.

In a slightly different political context, Every and Augoustinos have conducted a series of studies on refugees, asylum seekers and parliamentary discourse in Australia. For instance, Every (2006) illustrated how members of the government portrayed Australia as being ‘too generous’ and constructed asylum seekers as being ‘bogus’ and the ‘problem’ to which ‘stronger’ asylum policies were the solution, allowing the speakers to position themselves positively while legitimising policies that limited access to asylum. In contrast, refugee advocates argued in favour of providing more support to asylum seekers by portraying the government as acting immorally by limiting access, presenting Australia as having an obligation to help those in need and constructing asylum seekers as being compelled to come to Australia by persecution. Every also highlighted that forms of ‘bureaucratic humanitarianism’ (Every, 2006, p. 128) worked to dehumanise asylum seekers so as to lessen potential empathy and erode the related moral obligations.

Every and Augoustinos (2007) also explored the role of constructions of racism in Australian political discourse regarding asylum seekers. For instance, one way the policies were portrayed as racist was to highlight unequal treatment, in that asylum seekers arriving by boat were being turned away even though many more were arriving by air and this did not cause the same reaction; the speakers specifically suggested that

this was due to the race of those who arrived by boat, in that many were from the Middle East. Some other speakers spoke out against asylum seekers, but suggested this was due to ‘cultural differences’ rather than race in order to avoid accusations of racism (see also Hanson-Easey & Augoustinos, 2010); in turn, other speakers could discredit these arguments by highlighting their similarities with forms of ‘old-fashioned’ racism. The authors also highlighted the difficult situation advocates of asylum seekers may be in when trying to challenge racist discourse, as describing someone’s arguments as racist can violate conversational conventions resulting in defensiveness rather than constructive dialogue that could result in meaningful change (see also Augoustinos & Every, 2010). Overall they suggested that: ‘The categorical denial of racism and the simultaneous exclusion, oppression and demonization of minorities is a defining feature of contemporary responses to out-groups such as asylum seekers’ (Every & Augoustinos, 2007, p. 411).

Further research by Every and Augoustinos (2008b) highlighted that arguments against asylum seekers suggested that asylum seekers were a threat to Australia’s national interest, that Australia had already been very generous to asylum seekers, that asylum seekers were acting ‘unfairly’ and that Australia only had limited resources and therefore could not afford to assist all asylum seekers. In contrast, arguments in favour of asylum seekers suggested that they brought benefits to the country, that not supporting asylum seekers would tarnish Australia’s image of being generous and that asylum seekers deserved a ‘fair go’ in the name of equality to all. In a more detailed analysis of pro-asylum seeker arguments, Every and Augoustinos (2008a) found that advocates attempted to critique the ‘culture of disbelief’ by highlighting similarities between asylum seekers and Australians; drawing similarities between current asylum seekers and those who were recognised as legitimate refugees of the past, such as Jews fleeing Nazi Germany; and drawing on notions of moral obligation that suggested Australia had a duty to assist those fleeing persecution.

Every (2008, p. 212) also analysed political discourse on asylum seekers in terms of humanitarianism, suggesting this constituted an ideological dilemma (Billig et al., 1988) in the sense that it is ‘built upon the opposing liberal binaries of ‘costs to self’

(individualism) versus ‘duty to others’ (universalism)’. This allows people to undermine the legitimacy of asylum seekers by taking a supposedly ‘even-handed’ or ‘pragmatic’ stance, arguing that the needs of asylum seekers should be balanced against the needs and interests of the nation, and in doing so they can argue that asylum seekers place an unacceptable burden on the country, and threaten the national economy, security, sovereignty and culture. By taking a ‘pragmatic’ approach, this argument may also portray appeals to the rights of asylum seekers as being too ‘emotional’ and ‘irrational’, further undermining them. Overall this research by Every and Augoustinos has been important in carefully analysing the ways in which Australian political discourse justifies or criticises asylum policy through various constructions of asylum seekers and refugees, as well as how this closely relates to constructions of the nation and national interests.

These findings appear relatively consistent with some of the similar research undertaken in the UK context; indeed Schech (2010) found there to be general similarities between dominant political discourses on asylum seekers in Australia compared with the UK, although there also appear to be some regional differences. In the UK, Capdevila and Callaghan (2008) employed a form of discourse analysis to investigate the relationship between constructions of asylum seekers and refugees and immigration policy. Through the analysis of a political speech by a former leader of the UK Conservative Party, Michael Howard, they illustrated how discourse may have racist functions, such as legitimising particular forms of power relations, while attempting to avoid accusations of racism. In particular, their analysis showed how the speaker positioned himself, by drawing on his migrant ancestry, as an example of a ‘good’ migrant, one who has ‘integrated’ and is making a contribution to British society. The constructions of refugees and asylum seekers also associated them with potential criminality and disease. As emphasised by Durrheim and Dixon (2005), this illustrates that so-called ‘modern racism’ also contains elements of ‘old fashioned’ racism, in that racist stereotypes are associated with the out-group in a probabilistic way, rather than saying that all migrants and asylum seekers are bad, thereby avoiding accusations of being racist. Capdevila and Callaghan further explained how the notion of hospitality

that is used highlights the dependency of refugees and the generosity of the hosts, while emphasising that this generosity and tolerance has a limit that should not be exploited by the refugees. In this way, harsh immigration policies are legitimised and asylum seekers potentially vilified without the speaker necessarily being treated as racist.

Similarly, Goodman has undertaken a range of discursive research regarding asylum seekers in the UK context. For instance, Goodman and Speer (2007) analysed a range of texts from political speeches, TV debates and newspaper articles, focusing on the categories that were employed around asylum seekers and their potential consequences. They suggested that participants in these debates took the use of categories as a topic for debate, which highlights the relevance of discursive approaches to this subject. In particular, the analysis showed the ways that some categories, such as 'illegal immigrants' and 'asylum seekers', may be conflated, which implies that asylum seekers are potentially illegitimate and justifies suspicion and harsh policies towards them. Similarly, they argued that dividing asylum seekers into legitimate refugees and economic migrants focuses the debate on determining asylum claims rather than considering ways of helping asylum seekers, and furthermore that the term 'asylum seeker' itself puts emphasis on what they seek to take from the host society, rather than relevant moral obligations. For this reason, they argued that 'the construction of asylum seekers is always fundamentally a *political* action' (Goodman & Speer, 2007, p. 179).

In a further study on the construction of asylum seekers, Goodman (2007) analysed data from internet discussion boards regarding the way people supported or criticised specific policies relating to asylum seekers, particularly one aspect that could result in the children of asylum seekers being separated from their parents. In particular, the analysis focused on various constructions of notions relating to 'family'. For example, those that were supportive of asylum seekers drew on notions of the 'loving family' and used humanising language such as 'kids' and 'mums', suggesting legislation that separated children from parents was inhumane (see also Every, 2006). In contrast, arguments against the asylum seekers portrayed them as 'breeding' in order to gain sympathy from the public, used dehumanising terms such as 'knock out a couple of sprogs' and 'siring children', and presented them as not taking responsibility for their

children, all of which served to undermine the legitimacy of the asylum seekers, present them as undeserving of empathy and otherwise legitimise the legislation. In this way the study provides further evidence regarding the important role that the use of categorisation has in terms of debates regarding asylum, as well as highlighting the way this is tied up with other aspects of rhetoric.

In subsequent research on the justification of asylum policies, Goodman (2008) illustrated how politicians argued that ‘tougher’ asylum policies were needed to address the views of members of British society, in the interest of maintaining a peaceful society and avoiding increased support to right-wing political parties by people who feel they are not being listened to by politicians. Goodman noted the perverse irony in politicians arguing for harsher asylum policies of the type that might be supported by right-wing parties in order to prevent further support to these parties; that is, more racist policies being introduced supposedly to prevent racism. He also noted how the suggestions about social cohesion implied that British society is infused with racism that will erupt at any opportunity if asylum and immigration policies are too liberal. These constructions work to position asylum seekers in opposition to communities and imply that their mere presence is a threat to those communities.

Goodman has also addressed the issue of racism in debates about asylum. For example, analysis of a range of materials in the public domain, including media discussion, showed speakers as orientating to a taboo on prejudice as well as a related taboo on making accusations of racism (Goodman, 2010). Thus speakers could accuse others of suppressing a real debate on the topic of asylum, while other speakers may carefully construct their responses in ways that were critical without making explicit racist accusations. Similarly, Goodman and Burke (2010) found that, in focus groups with students, opposition to asylum seekers was not necessarily perceived as racist, and could seem to be legitimately based on, for example, economic concerns. Again, the taboo on prejudice was treated as creating a form of censorship on ‘reasonable’ discussions of asylum. Further research by Burke and Goodman (2012), drawing on Facebook content, generally supported these findings but also identified some cases where people openly supported explicitly racist policies, such as the use of ‘Hitler’s gas

chambers' to kill asylum seekers, implying that some online contexts may facilitate normally taboo behaviour. Overall, the research by Goodman and colleagues demonstrates the important role that category construction and other aspects of rhetoric play in terms of justifying or criticising particular policies in relation to asylum seekers, as well as how issues of racism are usually carefully negotiated.

In a similar vein, Pearce and Stockdale (2009) drew on social representations theory (e.g., Moscovici, 1972, cited in Pearce & Stockdale, 2009) to analyse the constructions of asylum seekers in interviews in the UK with 20 'lay' members of the general public and 10 professionals who worked with asylum seekers. The analysis suggested that the lay people held a mixture of positive and negative representations of asylum seekers, which was often polarised – that is, they either felt asylum seekers were usually 'bogus' or that they usually were genuine. Negative portrayals, as found in other research, associated asylum seekers with seeking a better economic situation, being lazy or criminal; positive constructions suggested they were resourceful and might make a positive contribution to the UK through their work or in terms of cultural diversity. In contrast, the professionals tended to have a more 'balanced' approach, suggesting that most asylum seekers were probably genuine, but that poverty could be intimately tied with persecution and danger. Rather than being an economic drain on the UK or coming for social advancement, the professionals constructed asylum seekers as being skilled and argued they were unlikely to have been poor in their home countries as it is so expensive to get to the UK as an asylum seeker. Although this approach is useful for highlighting various constructions, the social representations approach appears limited as it conceptualises these as cognitive representations, and fails to see the way in which they may be action oriented within the interaction or to justify certain responses to asylum seekers (e.g., tighter immigration controls or more generous support to asylum seekers). In this sense, it does not pay enough attention to the roles taken up by the interviewees and how the constructions of the refugees might in turn be linked to their own identities and positions.

The discursive research discussed so far is extremely important in terms of examining how political, media and other public discourses function in relation to



justifying or criticising particular asylum policies as well as the way in which they construct and categorise asylum seekers and refugees. However, as with discursive research on racism more generally (Tuffin, 2008), this research has tended to focus on political, media, majority group and other elite discourse, largely excluding the voices of asylum seekers and refugees themselves, despite some of the researchers stating the importance of doing so (e.g., Lynn & Lea, 2003; Goodman & Speer, 2007). Kirkwood, Liu and Weatherall (2005) explained that it is important to look at the constructions put forth by members of minority groups themselves, as this should create a more empowering and relevant social psychology for people in minority groups. In this regard, Verkuyten (2005b, p. 234) argued that some discursive studies mistakenly ‘...neglect the political negotiation, positioning, and alliance building that go on in debates about belonging and identity, as well as the existence of majority discourses that aim to improve the position of migrants and minorities’. For these reasons, the next section discusses discursive research that includes discourses produced by asylum seekers and refugees themselves.

### **Refugee and asylum seeker discourse**

Verkuyten (2005b) highlighted the importance of gaining the views of minority group members in order to understand issues such as racism and identity formation, and that there is a particular lack of social psychological research in relation to asylum seekers and refugees. In my MSc thesis (Kirkwood, 2005) I argued that it was important to analyse the constructions put forth by members of minority groups for theoretical, practical and political reasons. Theoretically it is important in order to treat identity categories – such as ‘asylum seeker’ and ‘refugee’ – as social accomplishments rather than neutral descriptions of the world (Edwards & Potter, 1993). Practically, as all constructions argue against alternatives (Billig, 1991, 1996), analysing their constructions should provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issue as well as identifying positions from which to argue for the rights of asylum seekers and refugees. Politically, analysing the discourse of asylum seekers and refugees gives them

a voice in the discussion, allowing their own constructions to challenge oppressive constructions, rather than simply focussing on majority group or elite discourse. This section therefore critically discusses some of the extant discursive research from a variety of international contexts that includes the views of asylum seekers and refugees and is crucial for a more complete understanding of their experiences in host societies. It is worth noting that the data in these studies has been elicited through interviews and focus groups exclusively; it may be that recent shifts towards ‘naturalistic data’ in psychological discursive research (e.g., Potter & Hepburn, 2005) have been at least partially responsible for the exclusion of minority voices that are more difficult to access, including those of asylum seekers and refugees.

Along these lines, Hardy (2003) drew on the work of Michel Foucault to undertake a discursive study into the effect of the refugee determination system on refugees and how refugees may challenge or resist the system. Her data consisted of a total of 86 qualitative interviews with civil servants, politicians, employees of voluntary organisations and refugees in the UK, Canada and Denmark, as well as drawing on archival materials, statistical reports, parliamentary speeches and newspaper articles. Analysis of the interviews with asylum seekers suggested that they presented themselves as taking an objective view on the ‘factual’ evidence regarding someone’s claim for asylum. However, comparisons between the different countries suggested that there were different approaches to and uses of information, which could lead to one person becoming a refugee under one nation’s refugee system whereas they would be rejected under a different nation’s system, and the outcome of these processes would determine the allocation of associated rights and resources. In terms of resistance, Hardy drew on the example of Ghanaian refugees who provided information to civil servants and worked to increase knowledge about the situation in Ghana to increase the acceptance rates of asylum seekers from this country. She argued that this form of resistance was valuable to the refugees, but it also had a negative side in the sense that it reinforced the legitimacy of a system of control. This research is useful because it not only looks at the way that official discourse works to justify the asylum system and produce ‘truths’, but also the way in which refugee discourse may work to evolve the system in their favour.

In the Canadian context, Lacroix (2004) undertook qualitative interviews with eight male African asylum seekers in order to investigate the relationship between the asylum process and identity. Her analysis illustrated that the refugee identity starts to take shape from the moment they decide to leave their home country, and is characterised by a sense of defeat. The interviewees described the experience of coming to a new country to seek asylum as feeling like being reborn, having to learn how to live again, and being totally cut off from the old life. They also highlighted that the experience was forced upon them, and that they have a continuing lack of choice, especially as they are usually unemployed or underemployed, and still see themselves in terms of the jobs they had in their home countries and the skills they still have that go unused, even though they desire to be productive members of the new society. Lacroix argued that the experience of being marginalised and deskilled not only has negative effects for the individual refugees but also is likely to have negative consequences for their long term integration into the host society. While interesting, the analysis was limited in a number of ways, particularly in terms of failing to treat the refugees' discourse as fulfilling various social functions and also by missing the ways in which asylum seekers may attempt to negotiate or resist the identities that are placed upon them. For instance, the author failed to make the point that the asylum seekers' discourse was shaped to position them as potentially contributing members of society and place responsibility for negative aspects of their lives onto external forces.

In contrast, Colic-Peisker (2005) undertook a discursive approach to the constructions of identity and integration among Bosnian refugees in Australia, paying particular attention to the functions performed by the discourse. The starting point for the analysis was that they were 'whites in a white country' (Colic-Peisker, 2005, p. 621) and yet were still victims of prejudice and discrimination; however, even when the refugees described incidents that could be described as discriminatory, they did not portray them as such and argued that they were not victims of discrimination. The author suggested that this discursive strategy positions the refugees as 'insiders', portraying themselves as more similar to most Australians than migrants and refugees who are not white, associating themselves with what they see as a positive identity. Similarly, the

Bosnian Muslims were portrayed as being 'less religious' than Muslims from other nations, such as Arab countries, and were able to become 'invisible' Muslims, avoiding some of the negative connotations that Muslims might have in Australia. Ultimately though, based on the interview data, the author argued that the language barrier made it difficult for most of the 'middle-class' refugees to gain satisfying employment, resulting in marginalisation and frustration due to their identities as professionals. This study is particularly interesting given the way it takes a specifically discursive approach to qualitative interviews with refugees and relates this to the specific national and local context in order to draw conclusions about the relationship between identity, integration and discrimination.

Kumsa (2006) developed a unique approach to investigating identity among refugees in Western countries. She argued that previous studies on the acculturation of refugees are limited in that they:

constrain the concepts of culture and identity into rigid dichotomies of the new country and the homeland, the ethnic and the mainstream. They assume an encounter between already formed subjects. It is my contention that such theorizing obscures the mutually constitutive aspects of ethnic and mainstream identities. (Kumsa, 2006, p. 235)

This criticism seems to apply to much mainstream research on acculturation (e.g., Berry, 1997), which focuses on the extent to which minority group members engage with either 'their own' or the host culture, rather than looking at the way that intercultural contact shapes and constructs their identities and 'cultures'. In order to address some of these limitations, Kumsa developed the concept of 'dispersal-affinity', which she describes as the contradictory effects of being torn from one's homeland (dispersal) while desiring to belong (affinity). This concept is intended to break down binary notions of identity, including the binary between essentialist and social constructionist perspectives on identity. Kumsa suggested that the relationship between refugee identities and notions of nationhood helped to explain hostility towards refugees, arguing that:

refugees signal the loss of nation—they have lost theirs and here they come to threaten ours! Compassion and hatred intimately intertwine in this moment of deep reflexivity. Refugees are seen as enemies of the nation and as threatening strangers because they evoke such deep ontological uncertainty and existential insecurity. (Kumsa, 2006, p. 240)

Kumsa's analysis of focus group data from young Oromo (an African ethnic group) refugees in Canada suggested that they rework notions of being a refugee and belonging, in the sense that they move between feeling like a refugee and distancing themselves from being a refugee, which they associate with negative connotations. In particular, the refugees said that the majority group associated refugees with a 'newness' that did not belong and with being uncivilised. The focus group data also suggested that the refugees could rework the refugee identity so that it could mean exile in their homeland or feeling at home in exile because it was free from oppression. Kumsa's general approach is interesting in the sense that it tries to break down the binaries that exist in some previous research in this topic and make connections between micro identity processes and macro processes of nation building and oppression.

Focusing on the ways in which refugees and asylum seekers actively tried to engage members of local community to influence their views and build positive relations, Khan (2008) undertook interviews and focus group sessions with members of a refugee and asylum seeker theatre group based in Scotland and placed this in the context of pervasive media portrayals of asylum seekers. The interviewees explained that they used drama, dance, cultural events and forms of dialogue to challenge the negative media portrayals of asylum seekers and 'empower' members of the local community so that they could have a more accurate and positive view of asylum seekers. These events included discussion and question and answer sessions with young people and people with drug addictions. Some of the refugees portrayed themselves as responsible, contributing members of society and countered representations that equated asylum seekers with economic migrants in disguise. Furthermore, some interviewees, rather than constructing some locals as racist or prejudiced, constructed them as simply not having accurate information about asylum seekers, and not being appropriately informed by the Government or the media. This study highlights ways in which asylum

seekers and refugees may use collective means to engage with local communities to empower both themselves and members of the host society, as well as to develop discursive strategies to improve the way they are portrayed and create more positive social relations.

Leudar, Hayes, Nekvapil and Baker (2008) also analysed the way that asylum seekers and refugees constructed notions of themselves and located their analysis within the context of media portrayals and the views of members of the public. Their analysis of constructions of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK press found that they were often characterised as an economic drain, lacking basic human qualities, potentially criminal and carriers of disease. The authors noted that these constructions were action orientated and relevant to the function at hand; e.g., constructing them as criminal justified the use of increased control and electronic tagging, associations with disease justified compulsory health checks and all justified their general exclusion from society. Among the interviews with six 'locals', one illustrated the common portrayal of many asylum seekers being 'bogus', two denied direct contact but constructed them as different and 'exotic', and one interviewee constructed them as legitimate and deserving of help and sympathy, especially given the persecution they have received and the unfair prejudice against them. Interviews with six refugees and asylum seekers suggested that the biographical narratives they produced were oriented to challenge the 'hostility themes' present in the media, either implicitly or explicitly. Therefore, rather than being a drain on the economy, they constructed themselves as skilled and willing to work, but kept from working by legislation; they sometimes constructed their past lives as positive and well-off to discredit the suggestion that they were 'economic migrants'; and they highlighted the types of persecution they received, thereby backing up the legitimacy of their claims to refugee status.

By approaching discourse as operating through 'dialogical networks', the authors illustrated the relationships between media, local and refugee discourse, including their potential to reinforce or resist each other. The present research to some extent replicates this study as well as extends it in several important ways. In relation to context, Leudar et al.'s (2008) study was based in England, specifically Manchester, whereas the present

study will focus on Scotland, particularly Glasgow. Moreover, whereas the locals they interviewed tended not to have had direct contact with asylum seekers or refugees, the present study will specifically enlist local people who are likely to have direct experience with asylum seekers and refugees, as well as people who work in organisations that support refugees. In this way, the present study will provide an analysis of discourse related to asylum seekers' and refugees' experiences in the UK that is rooted in the talk of those who are most likely to have a direct impact on these experiences.

## **Conclusions**

This review of relevant research literature highlights some of the apparent tensions within asylum policies and practices, which may work both to prevent those fleeing persecution to access asylum in the UK as well as hampering their successful settlement if they do gain access. It also illustrates the usefulness of taking a discursive approach to the topic of refugees and integration, drawing on both the views of majority group members and refugees themselves, in order to investigate how they function to justify or criticise particular sets of policies, practices and relationships. Although there has been an increase in the amount of discursive research on this topic in recent years, much of it has been limited by focusing solely on majority group discourse or by failing to pay enough attention to the social functions achieved through discourse. Moreover, research has yet to link recent developments regarding 'place identity' (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Durrheim & Dixon, 2004, 2005) and discursive approaches to integration (Bowskill et al., 2007) to the study of asylum seekers and refugees. In terms of context, to my knowledge there has as yet been no research to take a discursive social psychological approach to the situation of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland, a site which is particularly interesting to study given the potential differences in policy emphasis and public reception discussed above.

It is for these reasons that this thesis focuses on discourse around asylum seekers, refugees and integration in Scotland. Moreover, as much of the research cited above

focused on the ways in which discourse functions to exclude minority group members, this study will specifically aim to focus on ‘counter discourses’ in order both to develop a more comprehensive understanding of this topic and to help identify ways of challenging oppressive social relations (Kirkwood et al., 2005; Tuffin, 2008; Tuffin, Praat & Frewin, 2004). Therefore the research will draw on discourse from asylum seekers and refugees themselves, as well as those who work to support asylum seekers and refugees, in addition to members of the local population. In terms of structuring the approach, Lacroix’s (2004, p. 154) typology usefully identified three relevant levels to such an investigation:

1. Macro: The international asylum system which dominates the definitions of refugees and is governed by laws;
2. Meso: National level discourses that relate to different policies and administrative practices that construct refugees as ‘Other’ and exclude asylum seekers from full participation in the host society;
3. Micro: The specific experience of individual refugees in the various spheres of their lives and the way this is shaped by local asylum policies.

In this regard, discursive research on refugees and asylum seekers has tended to focus on three related issues: 1) discourses that justify or oppose the presence of asylum seekers and refugees in potential host societies (e.g., Every & Augoustinos, 2008a, 2008b); 2) discourses relating to particular policies and practices that impact on asylum seekers and refugees (e.g., Goodman, 2007; Hardy, 2003); and 3) discourses relating to the relationship between refugees, asylum seekers and other members of the local population (e.g., Colic-Peisker, 2005; Khan, 2008; Kumsa, 2006). For this reason – and due to the emerging analytic themes – the empirical chapters of this thesis are arranged so as to deal with these three distinct yet related topics: 1) the presence of asylum seekers and refugees; 2) relations between asylum seekers, refugees and members of the local population; and 3) the impact of the asylum system on asylum seekers and refugees.

This research has an overarching research question as well as three more specific research questions. The overarching research question is: How does the interview



discourse of asylum seekers and refugees, people who work to support asylum seekers and refugees, and local people who live in the areas where asylum seekers tend to be housed, function to justify or challenge policies, practices and sets of social relations in terms of refugees' and asylum seekers' experiences in Scotland? The more specific research questions, which relate to the three empirical chapters of this thesis, are as follows. 1) How does the interviewees' discourse function to justify or challenge the presence of asylum seekers and refugees in the host society? 2) How does the interviewees' discourse function to justify or challenge particular views, experiences or policies with regard to social relationships between asylum seekers, refugees and other members of the host society? 3) How does the interviewees' discourse function to justify or challenge particular policies and practices in relation to the asylum system and its impact on asylum seekers and refugees? The next chapter outlines the methodological approach taken to address these research questions.

## Ch. 2. Methodology

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*What if it is just talk? Everything's talk isn't it? (sic)*

-Cormac McCarthy (1992, p. 29) from the novel *All the pretty horses*

In this chapter I will outline the methodological approach I have taken. Specifically, I will provide background and explanation for my discursive approach, describe and justify my data collection methods and outline my methods for data analysis.

### **General discursive approach**

As mentioned in the introduction, discourse analysis in psychology has emerged as an alternative to cognitive approaches, and treats language as being actively involved in constructing reality rather than being a neutral description of it (Edwards, 1997; Edwards & Potter, 1992; McKinlay & McVittie, 2008; Potter, 1996; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Crucially, this involves the application of qualitative methods for analysing text and talk as the topics of analysis *in themselves* rather than as a route for understanding what is going on inside someone's head (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). This stands in contrast to mainstream social psychological methods that tend to rely on quantitative attitudinal surveys and treat language as a neutral vehicle for transporting the thoughts and cognitions of individuals (Rapley, 2001). As mentioned above, such methods have been criticised on the grounds that they assume it is possible to separate an attitude from the object that is being evaluated, whereas different 'attitudes' are argued to involve different constructions of the relevant 'objects' (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). In this

regard, Reicher and Hopkins (1996a, 1996b, 2001) have illustrated that people do not simply respond to a pre-existing social reality, but are actively involved in the construction of social categories and contexts that create future-orientated social realities. This means that quantitative methods are particularly limited, and even dangerous, for studying topics related to racism and intergroup relations, as they focus on psychological dispositions and treat social categorisation as a neutral aspect of information processing, rather than exploring the ways in which language is actively involved in structuring the world (Augoustinos & Reynolds, 2001; Billig, 1976, 1996; Hopkins, Reicher & Levine, 1997). In contrast, discursive approaches involve analysing discourse in terms of the social functions it performs, such as the way that particular narrative structures, rhetorical devices, uses of categories and ways of describing serve particular ends by justifying or criticising certain actions or states of affairs (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Edwards & Potter, 1992; McKinlay & McVittie, 2008).

However, it is important to note that the term ‘discursive approaches’ functions as an umbrella term that includes a wide variety of more specific qualitative methods that investigate the functioning of talk and text, including Discursive Psychology, Critical Discourse Analysis and Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (McKinlay & McVittie, 2008). In a general sense, these approaches vary from the so-called ‘light’ or ‘bottom up’ approaches originally developed by Potter and Wetherell (1987), which focus on the micro processes of discourse, through to the ‘dark’ or ‘top down’ approaches, which focus on wider discourses and how they relate to broader cultural and political contexts, as exemplified by the work of Parker (1992; Danziger, 1997, cited in Tiffin, 2005). Willig (2001) explained that the bottom up approaches to discourse are often influenced by ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, in terms of focusing on the way in which meaning is negotiated in everyday contexts, and the social functions that are achieved in doing so. In contrast, the top down approaches tend to be influenced by poststructuralism and Michel Foucault (e.g., Foucault, 1980, 1990), thus focusing on how language is constitutive of social and cultural relations more generally.

There have been intense debates between proponents of these different perspectives. Specifically, Schegloff (1997, 1998, 1999) has argued in favour of bottom

up approaches, particularly the use of conversation analysis, in terms of analysing the micro-processes with which people manage interactions, and has argued against drawing on wider cultural and contextual information in analysing discourse, describing it as a form of 'theoretical imperialism' (Schegloff, 1997, p. 167). In response, Billig (1999, p. 546) argued that conversation analysts already import a range of theoretical concepts into their analysis, and to ignore that point constitutes 'methodological and epistemological naivety'; that is, analytic concepts are being treated as merely read off the reality of the conversation rather than being accepted as concepts that analysts bring to the data. Wetherell (1998) argued for an approach that functions as a form of synthesis between the more fine-grained methods and those that draw on wider cultural processes. Her version of 'critical discursive social psychology' (Wetherell, 1998, p. 405) involves drawing on both a close analysis of how talk and texts function *and* relating these to wider issues of culture, power and social structure. It is this approach that most informs the methodological approach I will take, and it seems particularly suited to the topic of asylum seekers and refugees, as it has the strength of being empirically grounded as well as attending to the systems and structures in which asylum seekers and refugees find themselves.

More recently, another important issue that has been debated in discursive research relates to the use of interview data versus naturally occurring data. Even though Potter's earlier research drew heavily on interview data (e.g., Wetherell & Potter, 1992), more recently he and other colleagues have argued in favour of 'naturalistic data'; this is, data that have not been elicited by the researcher for the purposes of research (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). In their article, Potter and Hepburn outlined a number of limitations of qualitative interviews. The 'contingent' problems included: '(1) the deletion of the interviewer; (2) the conventions for representing interaction; (3) the specificity of analytic observations; (4) the unavailability of the interview set-up; (5) the failure to consider interviews as interaction' (Potter & Hepburn, 2005, p. 281). Many of these issues can be addressed by providing information on the context of the interviews, transcribing the interviews to sufficient detail and paying attention to the way the data is influenced by being produced in an interview context. The 'necessary' problems they

identified included: '(1) the flooding of the interview with social science agendas and categories; (2) the complex and varying footing positions of interviewer and interviewee; (3) the orientations to stake and interest on the part of the interviewer and interviewee; (4) the reproduction of cognitivism' (Potter & Hepburn, 2005, p. 281).

Overall they argued that these problems are so fundamental that it is generally better to collect and analyse 'naturalistic data' rather than use qualitative interviews; however they admit that for some sensitive issues interviews may be the only way of gathering the necessary data, although researchers should ensure that they have tried to access naturalistic data.

In the same journal issue, Smith, Hollway and Mishler (2005) responded to the criticisms of interview methodology. Smith suggested that one problem with the critique is that it advocates a particular type of qualitative analysis – specifically conversation analysis – and therefore the recommendations will only apply to certain types of studies, especially those that focus on the interactional aspects of discourse; for other types of qualitative methods the recommendations should not apply as they do not relate to the focus of the study. Hollway suggested that interviewees do not necessarily 'flood' the interview with social science concepts, but only do so if intended (e.g., to investigate how people talk about 'attitudes') or when poorly designed or conducted; she suggested that that narrative interviewing should elicit talk that is more closely related to the interviewee's experience and less reliant on social science concepts. She also argued that issues of footing, stake and interest are not unique to interview situations, but rather are found in all interactional settings, and therefore remain interesting topics for analysis in both interview data and naturalistic data. Mishler suggested that Potter and Hepburn treat transcription as atheoretical and he instead argued that all forms of data collection carry theoretical assumptions about the object of their analysis and therefore there is no such thing as one ideal system for transcription. Goodman and Burke (2010, p. 328) have further suggested that the argument draws an artificial distinction between 'natural' and 'contrived' data; they argued that 'talk is always simultaneously both 'natural' as speakers produce their own accounts, and 'contrived' as speakers are always attending to a particular social situation'. Therefore, although Potter and Hepburn (2005) outline

some potential issues and considerations in terms of using qualitative data, several critics have given reasons why their arguments are insufficient to justify avoiding qualitative research interviews altogether.

Moreover, a number of important discursive research studies on racism, integration and / or refugees have used qualitative interviews or focus groups (e.g., Augoustinos, Griffiths & Tuffin, 1999; Colic-Peisker, 2005; Durrheim & Dixon, 2005; Goodman & Burke, 2010; Hardy, 2003; Kumsa, 2006; Lacroix, 2004; Leudar et al., 2008; Pearce & Stockdale, 2009; Saxton, 2004; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Indeed, one limitation of much previous discursive research that has drawn on ‘naturalistic data’ is that the available data may be produced by ‘elites’ in society, and in particular it often excludes the voices of asylum seekers and refugees, as well as some local people, who may have more limited access to the forms of media that are routinely analysed, such as political debates, letters to the editor and internet discussion forums (e.g., Bowskill et al., 2007; Capdevila & Callaghan, 2008; Every, 2008; Every & Augoustinos, 2007, 2008a, 2008b; Goodman, 2007, 2008; Goodman & Speer, 2007; Lynn & Lea, 2003). I will therefore use qualitative interviews to access data on refugees, asylum seekers, integration and identity, as the limitations identified by Potter and Hepburn are not insurmountable, and interviews provide access to the discourse of specific members of the community, including asylum seekers and refugees, which would be difficult to access through other means. In the next section I detail the exact methods for data collection.

## **The interview data**

In order to undertake a discursive study in relation to refugees, asylum seekers and integration in Glasgow, I designed my data collection processes to gain data from three related groups; namely: 1) asylum seekers and refugees; 2) those involved in supporting asylum seekers and refugees; and 3) ‘local’ people who live in the areas where asylum seekers tend to be housed. It is important to stress that these groups are not treated as ‘pre-analytic’ explanatory variables; that is, any differences are not going to be

explained merely through someone's apparent membership of one of these groups. Rather, these groups were chosen as part of the sampling method, so that by purposively recruiting interview participants from these different groups I would be able to increase the variability across the data, an important aspect of discursive research (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Indeed, De Vaus (1996) suggests that such 'purposive sampling', where people are selected from a variety of categories within the population, is useful for non-random approaches such as this.

These particular groups were chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, people in these groups are expected to have 'first hand' knowledge of the situation of asylum seekers and refugees in Glasgow. This means that their discourse may be informed by direct experiences, rather than, for example, notions merely gained through the media or the views of others, as may be the case for some previous studies on this topic. Similarly, this means that their discourses may be of more consequence to the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees in Glasgow, as the discourses may justify particular practices and behaviour in relation to asylum seekers and refugees, or indeed the behaviour of asylum seekers and refugees themselves. Furthermore, selection of these particular groups allows a specific focus on integration, as all of these groups play important, and slightly different roles, in terms of the experiences asylum seekers and refugees (and indeed locals) have of integration. Another important reason for choosing these groups – particularly asylum seekers and refugees and those who work with them – was that it would allow the potential investigation of more 'positive' discourses relating to asylum seekers and refugees, and would therefore provide an important counterpoint to much previous research on racist discourse (Kirkwood et al., 2005). As already implied above, a crucial aspect of the data collection methods is that they allow for the analysis of asylum seekers and refugees' discourse; the analysis of minority group discourse, and asylum seekers and refugees in particular, has often been lacking from discursive research and constitutes an empirical gap in research and theory development (Verkuyten, 2005).

Recruiting from these different groups therefore allows a number of specific advantages in investigating this topic. It should be noted that the different groups are not

strictly mutually exclusive; some of the professionals were also locals or refugees, some of the asylum seekers and refugees were also involved in support work, as were some of the local Scottish people. This further supports the approach of treating these groups as being useful in terms of sampling methods rather than being simply explanatory categories.

All interviewees were informed of the research purposes when they were approached and before the interviews commenced. They were also given a written explanation of the research prior to the interview commencing, which they were allowed time to read and were given to keep, and signed a consent form (see appendices A, B & C). They were informed that the interviews were voluntary and confidential and that they had the right to withdraw at any point. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing similar questions to be asked across different participants while also allowing for prompts, probes and follow-up questions in order to elicit more detail on particular issues, as well as flexibility in the ordering of questions so as to make the discussion flow more naturally. Further details of the methods used for recruiting and interviewing participants for each group are provided below.

*Group 1: Professionals: People who work with asylum seekers and refugees*

It is important to investigate the way that members of the host society construct minority groups and their rights in a positive light so as to understand how they position themselves, the ways that minority groups and their rights may be supported and to challenge or resist racism (Kirkwood et al., 2005). In this regard, professionals working to support asylum seekers and refugees are likely to be a good source of ‘positive’ discourse on this issue and also to have views that are influenced by direct experience rather than generally negative political or media discourse (Pearce & Stockdale, 2009).

Interviewees were recruited through a combination of searching for appropriate organisations through the internet and through snowballing (i.e., interviewees suggested appropriate organisations and / or provided me with contact details for organisations). Organisations were generally approached by phone or e-mail and were given an



explanation of the research and invited to participate; they were also given copies of an information sheet to read in their own time (see Appendix A). This interview group consisted of 17 people who work for a total of 13 organisations involved in directly supporting and / or campaigning on behalf of asylum seekers and / or refugees in Scotland (see appendix D for background information). Sixteen of the individuals were paid for their work and one was a volunteer. Following the advice of De Vaus (1996), organisations were selected to provide variety across a range of different types of support work and geographic areas (mostly in Glasgow, but including some in Edinburgh). In addition to those organisations that took part, I contacted a further four organisations that either did not reply to my e-mails or phone messages or declined to take part. One further organisation was interested in taking part; however they had a lengthy ethics application process in place, and through discussion with my supervisors it was decided that the work involved was not justified by the single interview it would elicit, so this was not pursued.

The exact nature of the work ranged across individuals and organisations and included: directly supporting asylum seeker and refugees; assisting asylum seekers and refugees specifically in relation to employment and employability; campaigning and influencing policy in relation to asylum seekers and refugees; working with asylum seekers, refugees and other local people in relation to community development and / or integration; working with asylum seekers and refugees as part of a more general service. Of the interviewees, 10 were men and 7 were women; 13 were British and the remaining four were from different parts of Africa, including two refugees. All interviews were undertaken individually except in one case where two people preferred to be interviewed together. Interviews took place on the organisations' premises or nearby appropriate venue, such as a cafe. All interviews were audio recorded with express permission from the interviewees. All interviewees read an information sheet and signed a consent form (Appendix A). The interviews ranged in length from approximately 26 to 87 minutes, and were approximately 55 minutes long on average.

The interview questions were designed to elicit talk about the nature of the interviewees' work as well as discussion about the experiences of asylum seekers and

refugees in Scotland more generally. The structure of the interviews was influenced by Ager and Strang's (2004a, 2004b) qualitative research on the integration of refugees in the UK. My supervisors and the Research Officer at the Scottish Refugee Council were consulted in the development of the interview questions. The first two interviews were treated as pilot interviews, and the number of questions was reduced slightly following these, as the interviews otherwise seemed to be too long and risked not allowing interviewees to answer questions fully. The final interview questions were broken into five general topic areas. Following the advice of Hollway (2005), the initial questions on 'Support work' were designed to allow the interviewee to provide a narrative about themselves and their work in their own words, as well as comment on the relationship between their work, asylum seekers and refugees, and other relevant aspects of policy and social relations, allowing analysis of the relationship between identity and policy along the lines of research by Hardy (2003). Questions on 'Social inclusion' related to practical aspects of integration as outlined in Ager and Strang's (2004a) 'indicators of integration', as well as allowing interviewees to comment on the potential for two-way integration. Questions on 'Contact' and 'Perceptions' were designed to explore issues relating to social relations, allowing a discursive investigation of this topic in line with the work of Durrheim and Dixon (2005). The 'General' questions were designed to allow interviewees to provide further comments on the topic and raise issues I had not previously considered, as well as talk about integration in their own words in line with the work of Ager and Strang (2004b). The interview questions consisted of the following:

*Support work:* 'What does your work involve?', 'What issues are most important or difficult for asylum seekers and refugees?'

*Social inclusion:* 'To what extent are asylum seekers and refugees able to access suitable accommodation?', 'To what extent are asylum seekers and refugees able to access suitable education or employment?', 'What difference do asylum seekers and refugees make to local communities or wider society?'

*Contact:* 'What level of contact do asylum seekers and refugees have with other members of the local community or other asylum seekers and refugees?'

*Perceptions:* ‘How do you think asylum seekers and refugees are perceived by the local community, the media and wider society?’

*General:* ‘How well do asylum seekers and refugees adjust to life in Scotland?’, ‘What do you think could be done to better help asylum seekers and refugees?’, ‘Is there anything else you would like to add?’

### *Group 2: Asylum seekers and refugees*

As discussed in the introduction, including the voices of asylum seekers and refugees in this study helps address a noticeable gap in much of the discursive research on this topic. As with the views of professionals, it should allow the investigation of ‘positive positions’ and ‘counter discourses’ so as to challenge more oppressive discourses (Kirkwood et al., 2005; Tuffin et al., 2004). It also allows an understanding of how asylum seekers and refugees position themselves and how their discourses may have similarities or differences from those of majority group members (Verkuyten, 2005a, 2005b). Leudar et al. (2008) have also suggested that it may provide insight into the ways that dominant discourses influence refugees’ own constructions of their identities. Gathering data from this group therefore constitutes an important aspect of the study and will aid in contributing to existing research on the topic.

Interviewees were accessed through some of the organisations that had taken part in the set of interviews with professionals. Initially, six organisations were approached with the intention of providing a spread of interviewees across different geographical areas of Glasgow, different national groupings and different organisation types (specifically employability and integration). However, three of the organisations did not respond to my phone calls or e-mails. I therefore ended up with a total of 15 interviewees from three organisations that focused on integration in three different parts of Glasgow. All interviews were undertaken one-to-one in meeting spaces used by the organisations. I verbally explained the voluntary and confidential nature of the research, provided interviewees with an information sheet and all interviewees signed a consent form (Appendix B). All interviews were digitally audio recorded with the participants’

express permission, except in two cases where asylum seekers preferred not to be recorded and a written record was made instead. The interviews were conducted in English; for the most part, the interviewees' level of English was sufficient for the interview to proceed smoothly, although in two cases the interviewees' language difficulties resulted in relatively poor quality interview data.

Appendix E includes background information on the refugee and asylum seeker interviewees. The interviewees consisted of ten men and five women. Their countries of origin were made up of 11 different countries in Africa and the Middle East, including: Algeria, Eritrea, Gambia, Iran, Kenya, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Turkey, Uganda and Zambia. This generally maps onto the areas from which refugees in Scotland tend to originate; the Scottish Refugee Council's most recent annual review reported the ten most common countries of origin are: Afghanistan, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia and Zimbabwe (Scottish Refugee Council, 2011). Four had active asylum claims, four had their asylum claim refused, three had temporary leave to remain and four had indefinite leave to remain. The interviewees had been living in the UK between seven months and eleven years (approximately six years on average). They had therefore been living in the UK – most of that time in Glasgow – for long enough periods to talk in detail about their experiences. As the interviewees were at a variety of stages in the asylum process, they were able to provide insight into the different phases (i.e., having an active asylum claim, having a claim refused or receiving refugee status). The interviews ranged in length from approximately 18-64 minutes with an average of about 33 minutes. Participants received £10 in cash for taking part.

The interview questions were designed to generally map onto the questions asked of the professionals, although tailored to fit the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees. The structure of interview schedule was therefore also influenced by the work of Ager and Strang (2004a, 2004b), but began with an open narrative approach, as advocated by Hollway (2005), before moving on to more specific questions. The first two interviews were treated as pilot interviews, after which the questions were very slightly revised to aid understanding. As many of the interviewees were not fluent in

English, questions were often broken down into smaller parts or repeated using different or simpler language in order to make them easier to comprehend. The final questions were:

*Experiences and support:* 'Please tell me about your experiences since arriving in the UK', 'What issues have you found most difficult since being in the UK?', 'What support you have received from voluntary organisations, members of the local community and other individuals in the UK?'

*Social inclusion:* 'To what extent have you been able to access suitable accommodation?', 'To what extent have you been able to access suitable education and employment?'

*Contact:* 'What level of contact do you have with other members of the local community or other asylum seekers and refugees?'

*Perceptions:* 'How do you think asylum seekers and refugees are perceived by the local community, the media and wider society?'

*General:* 'How well do you feel you have adjusted to life in Scotland?'. 'What do you think could be done to better help asylum seekers and refugees?', 'Is there anything else you would like to add?'

### *Group 3: Scottish locals*

As discussed in the introduction, much of the discursive research on asylum seekers and refugees has focused on elite, media or political discourse (e.g., Capdevila & Callaghan, 2008; Goodman, 2008; Lynn & Lea, 2003). Pearce and Stockdale (2009) suggested that the media is likely to play a major role in shaping the views of general members of the public, especially in relation to an issue such as asylum seekers and refugees, where many members of the public have little direct experience. However, they also suggested that the views of members of the public may differ from those found in the media; these views are important as they are likely to have an impact on integration in terms of the amount and type of contact that asylum seekers and refugees have with other members of the public, as well relate to public support for particular policies and initiatives in

relation to asylum. Kirkwood et al. (2005) have argued that it is important to investigate the positions that majority group members take up in terms of being either for or against minority group rights, as this provides a more comprehensive understanding of the issue as well as identifying ways in which majority group members may support these rights and challenge racism.

In order to gain access to people who may have direct contact with asylum seekers and refugees, I sought interviews from Scottish locals who lived in the areas of Glasgow where asylum seekers tend to be housed through the dispersal scheme. To gain access to potential participants, I asked some of the professionals I interviewed for recommendations on appropriate community organisations as well as directly going through those organisations that had already taken part in the study and worked with general members of the local community in addition to asylum seekers and refugees. Using a form of purposive sampling (De Vaus, 1996) to access interviewees from a range of geographic locals around Glasgow (see Appendix F for further details) as well as a variety of potential views and experiences, I interviewed a total of 13 people through three organisations that work with general members of the public in addition to asylum seekers and refugees, as well as two organisations that provide more general services to members of the local community (one further organisation did not reply to my e-mails). The interviewees consisted of ten women and three men. All interviewees were white Scottish and had been living in the local areas for between three and forty-three years (approximately 21 years on average). The interviews were undertaken one-to-one in meeting spaces used by the organisations. All interviewees were verbally explained the voluntary and confidential nature of the research, were provided with an information sheet and signed a consent form (Appendix C). All of the interviews were digitally audio recorded with express permission from the interviewees and ranged in length from approximately 10-70 minutes with an average of about 37 minutes. Participants received £10 in cash for taking part.

The interview questions were designed to generally map onto the questions asked of the other two study groups, but were more general so that they focused on the contact they may have had with asylum seekers and refugees and the way that asylum seekers

and refugees are perceived. The first interviews were treated as pilot interviews; however, as they appeared to be successful, no change was made to the interview schedules. The final questions were:

*Contact:* ‘Please tell me how much contact you have had with asylum seekers and refugees and your experiences of this contact.’

*Social inclusion:* ‘Based on your knowledge, what level of contact do asylum seekers and refugees have with other members of the local community?’, ‘Based on your knowledge, how included are asylum seekers and refugees in aspects of society such as education and employment?’, ‘What difference does the presence of asylum seekers and refugees make to the local community or wider society?’

*Perceptions:* ‘How do you think asylum seekers and refugees are perceived by the local community, the media and wider society?’

*General:* ‘What do you think could be done to better help asylum seekers and refugees?’

## **Analytic strategies**

In outlining the process of analysing discourse, Potter and Wetherell (1987) included three key stages in the following order: transcription, coding and analysis. The transcription process itself – as with all aspects of data collection – is theory laden, as it involves particular assumptions about what counts as important aspects of the data and is therefore a crucial part of the analytic process (Hammersley, 2010; Mishler, 2005). At the initial stage, I transcribed all interviews to a ‘coarse’ level: I included all of the spoken words of the interviewee, all of my own questions and full statements and any major actions (such as the interviewee receiving a phone call or someone knocking on the door); I included pauses but did not time them, I excluded most of my own ‘back channel’ talk (e.g., ‘yeah’, ‘mm-hmm’) and I did not include aspects of intonation. This level of detail was sufficient for the initial coding process, as the focus was on the topics discussed and the words used, rather than on finer level detail such as intonation. Those extracts chosen for analysis and presentation in the thesis were transcribed to a more

detailed level, following some of the conventions described by Jefferson (2004) and widely used within discourse analysis (these are explained in appendix G).

Initial coding of the data was performed with each of the study groups once all of the data from that group had been collected and transcribed. This was done through importing the transcripts into the qualitative data analysis programme NVivo and reading through them carefully. Sections of the transcript were then coded under several ‘themes’ that related to different topics of interest, including those identified in the interview questions (e.g., employment, accommodation, integration) and those that emerged from the data (e.g., detention, persecution, racism) as well as some more abstract processes that appeared in the data (e.g., discussions of identity categories or labels, comparisons between nations, talk about the psychology of refugees). At this stage the coding process was relatively inclusive and allowed for sections to be coded under multiple themes.

Following previous examples in discourse analysis, the analysis was done by focusing in more detail on specific extracts from the data in terms of the way in which particular social actions appeared to be performed, identities were constructed and / or issues were managed. For example, this involved looking at how participants discussed issues of racism, constructed notions of integration, allocated blame for social problems, managed issues around the presence of refugees, and justified or criticised particular policies and practices. My own analysis is informed from discussions of extracts from my data with colleagues at meetings of the Postgraduate Psychology and Discourse Group (PoPDoG) and Scottish Ethnomethodology, Discourse, Interaction & Talk (SEEDIT) Research Group, as well as work done with my supervisors to prepare manuscripts for publication based on my data. The analysis was informed by a range of analytic concepts that have been developed by other discourse analysts; some of these key concepts are described in more detail below. It is important to note that the analysis will not consist of ‘spotting’ these concepts and devices, which would be insufficient to constitute analysis (Antaki, Billig, Edwards & Potter, 2003), but rather these analytic concepts are used to help explore the specific functions of the discourse.



### *Interpretative repertoires / working models*

In their seminal work on discourse analysis, Potter and Wetherell (1987, p. 149) introduced the concept of ‘interpretative repertoires’, which they put forward as their unit of analysis and defined as ‘recurrently used systems of terms used for characterizing and evaluating actions, events and other phenomena’. This concept has been used in some of the original research on racist discourse (e.g., Wetherell & Potter, 1992) as well as some more recent discursive research on asylum seekers and refugees (e.g., Goodman, 2007; Lynn & Lea, 2003). Although this is a useful concept for discussing some of the recurring patterns found within discourse, Durrheim and Dixon’s (2005, p. 66) concept of ‘working models’ – defined as ‘shared frameworks of explanation and evaluation’ – has the strength of acknowledging the way in which these are contingent to local actions rather than treating them as objects that can be extrapolated from their local context. They explained that these function to facilitate understandings of the social world as well as playing a performative role in actively constructing certain versions of the world.

### *Ideological dilemmas*

Althusser (1971, p. 158) defined ideology as ‘the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group’; he explained that it is inherent in a range of institutions and crucial for social control. Billig et al. (1988) further developed this idea by arguing that ideologies, rather than being unified systems, have a dilemmatic quality; that is, they are composed of contradictory elements that push against each other and are manifest in everyday conversations and so-called ‘common sense’ (e.g., liberal ideologies that involve treating people the same *and* taking account of unique needs). Wetherell and Potter (1992) suggested that the fragmented and dilemmatic nature of ideology presents opportunities for exploring, challenging and transforming discriminatory ideologies. Discourse analysis therefore involves examining the ways in

which individuals negotiate these dilemmas as they relate to everyday life in order to better understand the issues as well as to create positive social change.

### *Category entitlement, stake and interest*

The concepts of category entitlement, stake and interest are closely related and have a bearing on the extent to which accounts may be taken as truthful. In this regard, Potter (1996, p. 115) suggested that there are two key questions relating to someone's proposed identity when they make a claim: 'Does the person making the report have an *interest* that discounts the report? Does the person have an *entitlement* that increases its plausibility?' The notion of category entitlement originated in the work of Sacks (1992) and relates to the way that people may present themselves or others as being in a position to speak with authority on a subject, therefore presenting their claims as truthful. As discussed by Potter, the issues of stake and interest may be managed in such a way so that a person presents their account as a true aspect of the world rather than a product of their personal biases; conversely, highlighting the stake and interest of others is a rhetorical strategy that functions to undermine the trustworthiness of others' accounts.

### *Footing*

Goffman (1981) outlined the concept of footing, which regards the relationship between talk and speakers. For instance, people can present themselves as the author of a particular view or they can present themselves as the 'mere animator', which allows them to distance themselves from the statement, instead attributing it to other speakers, and therefore avoiding taking responsibility for the evaluation. Presenting an account as originating from another source can give it the appearance of factuality. Conversely, speakers can present an account as originating from someone else in order to criticise it (Buttny, 2003). Footing is therefore closely aligned with fact construction as well as

accountability in terms of who is to blame and whose version of the world is at stake (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996).

### *Identity categories*

From a discourse analytic perspective, identities are treated as accomplishments (Verkuyten & deWolf, 2002); in this sense they are performative rather than fixed aspects of social reality (Butler, 1990). Identity categorisation therefore needs to be understood as an active process – rather than a mere response to an objective and already existing social reality – in order to hold people morally accountable for their engagement with the world (Rapley, 2001). For instance, Reicher and Hopkins (1996a, 1996b, 2001) have demonstrated that people construct the content of identities and the related social context in order to create future-oriented social realities. They argued that social categories, the meaning attached to those categories and the associated courses of action, cannot be simply read off the social context in a straightforward manner, but rather are matters of contestation, argumentation and controversy. Billig (1991, 1996) has emphasised that the process of categorisation implies the opposing process of particularisation, whereby people account for exceptions to a given identity category. Identity categories are therefore an important aspect within discourse analysis, as the use of such categories holds important implications in terms of justifying or criticising particular groups and social relations.

### *Place-identity*

Drawing on the work of Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff (1983), Dixon and Durrheim (2000) further developed the concept of place-identity so as to address the relationships between notions of identity and the regulation of space. They argued that taking a discursive approach to place-identity facilitates an understanding of the way that notions of place feed into notions of identity, as well as highlighting the way in which place-identity is social in origin, being co-constructed with others, and that these identities are

practices that have functions. Dixon (2001) developed this idea further, suggesting that discursive approaches should be used to understand the way in which geographies are organised to control, for example, inter-ethnic contact; in this regard he stated that: 'The history of collective relations in many societies is, at least in part, a history of struggles over geography' (Dixon, 2001, p. 600). For instance, Durrheim and Dixon (2005) developed a comprehensive discursive and socio-spatial approach to intercultural contact, which they applied to the study of segregation at beaches in South Africa. Bowskill et al. (2007) drew on their approach to illustrate how discursive constructions of integration can be used to justify particular sets of intercultural relations. This concept will therefore be very useful in approaching the topic of refugees, asylum seekers and integration.

### *Subject positions*

Davies and Harré's (1990) concepts of 'subject positions' and 'positioning' are related to the notions of identity categories and place-identity, yet go further than this by treating people as constituting their own positions through discourse and as being potentially positioned by others. For instance, Hollway (1984) has illustrated the usefulness in analysing subject positions in her research on gender. She showed how individuals have some flexibility over the subject positions which they take up, although power relations mean that not all subject positions are equally available to all individuals (e.g., men and women cannot necessarily take up the same subject positions). Fairclough (2001) argued for analysing the ways in which individuals are constrained in what they may say or do, the relations they may enter with others and the subject positions they can take up. He suggested that emancipatory discourse takes two forms: those that are empowering, in the sense that they allow individuals to take up subject positions previously denied to them; and those that are transformative, in that they actually restructure the existing discursive orders. Furthermore, Butler (1990) has argued that power has a dual role in relation to identity, both productive – in the sense of producing certain subject positions, of which it tends to conceal its production and treat as natural –

and juridical – in the sense of managing and controlling the limits imposed upon people given particular subject positions. In this regard, Hardy (2003) has illustrated the importance of investigating subject positions in relation to asylum seekers, as the asylum system constrains the ways they may position themselves and yet it also allows them to challenge and change the system and their own positions in certain ways.

### *Rhetorical devices*

In addition to these more complex theoretical concepts, discourse analysis also involves paying attention to the functioning of rhetorical devices in a more general sense. At a broad level, Billig (1996) has highlighted the importance of treating discourse as having a variety of rhetorical functions and uses the term ‘witcraft’ to describe the skill by which people construct the world in particularly inventive ways to serve their purposes. More specifically, rhetorical devices include, but are not limited to: extreme case formulations, which orient to the factuality and legitimacy of claims (Pomerantz, 1986); lists (often constructed in three parts) that provide a sense of comprehensiveness (Jefferson, 1991); narratives that account for causal relations (e.g., Sambaraju & Kirkwood, 2010); and self-sufficient arguments, which appear as commonsensically true and therefore difficult to undermine (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). The analysis will therefore involve paying attention to ways in which discourse functions rhetorically to perform a variety of social functions.

### **Summary**

This study therefore draws on a discursive approach most closely aligned with Critical Discursive Social Psychology (Wetherell, 1998), which treats discourse as actively involved in constructing social reality, as performing a variety of social functions and shaping social relations more generally. The data consist of interviews with three interrelated groups in Scotland regarding issues around intergroup contact and integration: 1) asylum seekers and refugees; 2) professionals who work with asylum

seekers and refugees; and 3) local Scottish people who live in the areas where asylum seekers are housed. The analytic process involves transcribing the data, coding the data into a number of themes and analysis of specific extracts in terms of the social functions performed in the discourse. The analysis is informed by a number of analytic concepts, including: interpretative repertoires / working models; ideological dilemmas; category entitlement, stake and interest; footing; identity categories; place-identity; subject positions; and rhetorical devices. The presentation and analysis of data extracts begins in the next chapter.



### Ch. 3. The presence of asylum seekers and refugees

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*Once we had a country and we thought it fair,  
Look in the atlas and you'll find it there:  
We cannot go there now, my dear, we cannot go there now.*  
- W.H. Auden (1962) from the poem 'Refugee blues'

The perceived legitimacy of the presence of asylum seekers and refugees is likely to be closely intertwined both with asylum policies and the way asylum seekers and refugees are treated by members of the host society and is therefore an important issue for investigation. Indeed, much of the discursive research in relation to asylum seekers and refugees has focused on the arguments for or against their presence in the country of refuge, notably Australia (e.g., Every, 2006, 2008; Every & Augoustinos, 2007, 2008a, 2008b) and the UK (e.g., Capdevila & Callaghan, 2008; Lynn & Lea, 2003). An important aspect of these arguments is the role of humanitarianism, which constitutes an ideological dilemma (Billig et al., 1988) in terms of 'costs to self' and 'duties to others' (Every, 2008, p. 211). That is, rather than there being a straightforward answer regarding the legitimacy of the presence of refugees in a host society, this issue plays out through arguments, particularly around these two poles, and is therefore amenable to discourse analysis.

As argued by Potter and Wetherell (1987), evaluations are tied up with how the targets of evaluation are constituted; therefore arguments about the presence of refugees and asylum seekers are interrelated with the way in which asylum seekers and refugees are constructed through discourse. For instance, arguments in favour of the presence of asylum seekers and refugees may portray them as being in danger in their countries of



origin and therefore in need of protection (e.g., Every & Augoustinos, 2008b). Conversely, arguments against their presence may portray them as ‘bogus’ or as posing a threat to the host society and therefore not deserving of protection (e.g., Lynn & Lea, 2003). Moreover, these arguments may be tied up with constructions of the host nation; for instance, presenting the nation as under threat may be used to argue against asylum seekers whereas presenting it as a place that offers people a ‘fair go’ may be used to justify their presence (Every & Augoustinos, 2008a). This suggests that there are close links between constructions of people and places within these arguments, and therefore the concept of ‘place-identity’ (Dixon, 2001; Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Durrheim and Dixon, 2005) may be particularly relevant to these analyses. Specifically, this analysis will focus on how places – including both the host society and refugees’ countries of origin – are constructed and how these relate to particular constructions of people – both asylum seekers / refugees and members of the host society.

In order to identify the main themes for this empirical chapter, I read through the transcripts several times and coded sections that related to justification for or resistance to the presence of asylum seekers and refugees in the host society. As explained in the methodology section, the study was specifically designed to identify ‘positive’ or ‘counter discourses’ (Kirkwood et al., 2005; Tuffin et al., 2004), and as many of the interviewees were asylum seekers, refugees or those who supported refugees, most of the arguments tended to support the presence of refugees. This chapter is structured in line with the three emerging themes: 1) constructions that justified the presence of asylum seekers through portraying their countries of origin as dangerous; 2) constructions that justified the presence of asylum seekers through portraying them as benefiting the host society; 3) constructions that resisted the presence of asylum seekers through portraying the host society as unable to support them.

## **Places of danger and safety**

As the definition of a refugee hinges on a having a ‘well-founded fear of being persecuted’ (UNHCR, 2007, p. 16), the construction of this persecution as ‘real’ plays a

crucial part in the legitimisation of refugees' presence in a host society. This means that the construction of a refugee's country of origin is constitutive of their own identity; that is, whether they are 'really' a refugee and therefore justified in being provided with asylum. Although some discursive research has looked at constructions of the host nation in terms of justifying or resisting the presence of refugees (e.g., Every & Augoustinos, 2008a), research has yet to investigate the constitutive relationships between host societies / countries of origin and asylum seekers / members of the host society in terms of place-identity. These particular extracts were selected as they illustrate a range of ways in which both local members of the host society and asylum seekers / refugees legitimised the presence of refugees through portraying their countries of origin as unsafe and the host society as being safe.

This first extract is from an interview with a Scottish local and is in response to a question about how asylum seekers are seen by wider society. This extract deals directly with arguments regarding the legitimacy of asylum seekers and refugees and makes specific references to the problems in their countries of origin.

*Extract 1: Local 1*

- 1    L1    before I came here (0.8) I'll class myself as the wider society
- 2    SK    okay
- 3    L1    (.) I assumed they were (1.2) people looking for a cheap way of living (.) running
- 4            from their own country coz they had nothing then coming to the UK and (0.6) Italy
- 5            and Germany because we had plenty of money and we'd (.) give them it
- 6    SK    (.) right
- 7    L1    that was the way I portrayed them (0.6) they were just selfish people just running for
- 8            where they get the best (0.8) but once I've come here and listened to a few stories
- 9            (0.8) I realised these countries have got problems, they've been splitting up families
- 10          they're war-torn (0.8) they're actually in fear of their (0.5) lives (2.0) so you realise
- 11          there is problems that they weren't just running away to get a better life they're (1.0)
- 12          they're running away because they had to (.)

- 13 SK right=  
14 L1 =they've had to leave their home they would probably like to go back to (.) if it was a  
15 better country  
16 SK right  
17 L1 (.) I realised that

In order to answer the question, the interviewee drew on the identity embedded in the question – ‘wider society’ (l. 1) – to present himself as entitled to answer the question with his own views (see Potter, 1996). The response is constructed in the form of a temporal narrative within which the interviewee moved from one perspective – ‘before I came here’ (l. 1) – to another – ‘but once I’ve come here’ (l. 8). In this narrative, the ‘here’ can be heard as referring to the drop-in centre where the interview took place and which facilitates contact between asylum seekers, refugees and other people living in the local area. The narrative is also constructed in such a way that it contrasts a previous state of misunderstanding – ‘I assumed’ (l. 3) – with a newer state of understanding – ‘I realised’ (l. 9). Presenting the response in this way has the effect of portraying the original perspective as mistaken and the latter perspective as true, as only something true can be realised (and ‘realise/d’ is used three times in this part of the narrative) whereas something assumed can be either true or false. Furthermore, connecting the two states with ‘but once I’ve come here and listened to a few stories’ (l. 8) presents the drop-in centre and the contact with asylum seekers as the mechanism for that change, implying that the change in view was due to increased knowledge from those who are in a position to know the truth, rather than based on assumptions.

The two perspectives also offer two different constructions of asylum seekers, with related implications in terms of morality and responsibility. Narratives such as these not only describe a sequence of events but also allocate responsibilities and suggest causal links (Edwards, 1997; Sambaraju & Kirkwood, 2010). The first describes ‘them’ as coming to the UK for economic reasons whereas the second suggests that they fled due to the danger in their countries of origin. More specifically, within the first perspective the countries are contrasted in terms of wealth – ‘they had nothing’ (l. 4)

whereas ‘we had plenty of money’ (l. 5) – and this is presented as a causal explanation for their behaviour (i.e., they migrated for economic reasons). This is further emphasised by the use of a personality ascription – ‘they were just selfish people’ (l.7) – that has negative moral implications – that is, they were only thinking of themselves. This, coupled with the statement in relation to the UK’s wealth – ‘we’d (.) give them it’ (l. 5) – implies both that they were only interested in their economic situation and they were getting something from the UK that they had not earned. Overall this has the effect of portraying the asylum seekers as neither deserving of entry to or support in the UK nor deserving sympathy with regard to their situation. This narrative may be helpfully considered as the ‘standard story’ of refugees; that is, in common with the ‘standard story’ of indigenous rights in postcolonial countries, which tends to deny any responsibility on the part of the majority ethnic group (Kirkwood et al., 2005; Nairn & McCreanor, 1990, 1991), this narrative presents asylum seekers and refugees as ‘really’ economic migrants who neither need nor deserve asylum (e.g., Leudar et al., 2008).

However the second perspective undermines these implications. In particular, rather than discussing the countries of origin in economic terms they are described as having ‘problems’ (l. 9), which may include ‘splitting up families’ (l. 9) and being ‘war-torn’ (l. 10); this construction implies that other countries, such as the UK, are without these problems, and therefore are implicitly associated with safety. The statement ‘they’re actually in fear of their (0.5) lives’ (l. 10) presents this as real through the use of the term ‘actually’ (l. 10) (in contrast to what may be ‘assumed’). Furthermore, this ‘fear’ (l. 10) is presented as a state that can be contrasted with the previous description of asylum seekers being ‘selfish’ (l. 7), which functions as a causal explanation for them leaving their country in that they are afraid they may die if they stay. The upshot is then presented: ‘they weren’t just running away to get a better life they’re (1.0) they’re running away because they had to’ (ll. 11-12). This statement is hearable as implying that leaving for a ‘better life’ is less acceptable than leaving ‘because they had to’, partly portrayed through the use of the word ‘just’, which suggests the first reason bears less moral weight (Lee, 1987). More specifically, it suggests that people are culpable – and perhaps admonishable – if they choose to come to Britain for economic reasons;

however, asylum seekers' presence in the UK is legitimate given their lives were in danger and so they had no other choice.

It is worth considering this construction in the light of Dixon and Durrheim's (2000) notion of place-identity. They suggest that the way places are constructed through discourse are rhetorical actions that can suggest who belongs or does not belong. In this case, constructing the UK in terms of its wealth and contrasting this with the relative poverty of asylum seekers' countries of origin functions to suggest that they are coming to the UK for economic reasons rather than due to persecution. Conversely, constructing their countries of origin as unsafe implies that the UK is a place of safety and therefore highlights the underlying issues of danger and asylum rather than economic motivations. These constructions of place are therefore constitutive of the identity of others, either as 'selfish' people who are only interested in wealth and are undeserving of access to the UK or as people who are really in fear of their lives and therefore in need of asylum.

The next extract, also from a Scottish local, similarly legitimises the presence of refugees through constructing their countries of origin as having problems. Moreover, this is done through contrasting these countries with the host society, and thus portraying the host society as relatively problem-free, while linking these constructions of place to moral obligations. This extract is from a section of the interview in which the interviewee was explaining his views on immigration and international relations.

*Extract 2: Local 2*

- 1 L2 all these people who come in here (1.0) Eritrea or eh (.) Afghanistan, Iran (1.2)
- 2 they've all been affected by our government's policies (0.7) war and all this carrying
- 3 on
- 4 SK yeah
- 5 L2 (0.7) and you get to see them (1.1) in here, people from Burundi (.) and uh (2.0)
- 6 °what ya ma call it° (.) Rwanda (1.8) when you think of the problems over here (0.5)
- 7 ya know (1.8) compared to some things these people have been through (0.9) we've

As with extract 1, the interviewee's references to 'in here' (ll. 1 & 5) can be heard as referring to the drop-in centre where the interview took place, and serves to locate the discussion in terms of people who may actually be present. Given the context of a discussion of different nations, the 'our' is hearable as referring to the UK (Billig, 1995). The narrative therefore makes a connection between asylum seekers' countries of origin and the UK, so that the UK is portrayed as being responsible for problems – 'war and all this carrying on' (ll. 2-3) – in these other countries: 'they've all been affected by our government's policies' (l. 2). Furthermore, listing asylum seekers' countries of origin – 'Eritrea [...] Afghanistan, Iran' (l. 1) – portrays a sense of completeness (Jefferson, 1991), therefore implying that the UK's role in the problem is broadly applicable to asylum seekers more generally. In this way, the UK is portrayed as having played a causal role in creating the problems in asylum seekers' countries of origin and therefore as at least partly responsible for their presence in the host society.

In lines 6-8, the interviewee produces a comparison between the host society and asylum seekers' countries of origin. Specifically, the interview makes a contrast between 'the problems over here' (l. 6) – which can be heard as referring to the UK – and 'some things these people have been through' (l. 7) – which can be heard as referring to asylum seekers and the 'war and all this carrying on' (ll. 2-3) in their countries of origin. This comparison between the countries serves to make any apparent or potential problems disappear: 'we've not got problems at all' (ll. 7-8). The use of the extreme case formulation serves to strengthen the evaluation and protect against potential challenges (Pomerantz, 1986). In so doing, asylum seekers' countries of origin are constituted as places of extreme danger whereas the UK is constituted as safe and problem free.

When this construction is linked to the suggestion that these problems are due to 'our government's policies' (l. 2), it becomes possible to hear moral implications from the contrast of problems in other countries with a lack of problems in the UK. In the previous extract, constructions of asylum seekers' countries of origin functioned to present the danger as real; this construction takes it further by implying that the UK has

a responsibility to assist people who are in danger due to the actions of the UK. Moreover, the relative lack of problems in the UK implies that it is possible to provide assistance where these other countries have been unable to support or protect their citizens. In this way the constructions of place (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000) and the description of problems (or lack therefore) at the national level function not only to explain why asylum seekers and refugees had to flee their countries and to portray them as legitimate, but also to make the case why the UK has a responsibility to provide sanctuary. The next extract, from an asylum seeker, similarly illustrates how a comparison between a country of origin and the host society functions to portray the speaker as legitimate.

*Extract 3: Refugee 3*

- 1 SK what would you say that you've found most difficult since being in the UK?
- 2 R3 (2.0) u::h (.) believe me I do not feel any difficulties in UK
- 3 SK okay
- 4 R3 (.) and that's uh (.) people sorta think about that (.) that uh we have lot of difficulties
- 5 here (1.0) but I think (1.2) when I was in ((country of origin)) I have a lot of
- 6 problems, I told you [about this]
- 7 SK [right] mm-hmm
- 8 R3 (.) I came here (.) I told you before I feel relaxed
- 9 SK mmm
- 10 R3 and then I put c- claim that (1.2) ↑when you put the claim↓ (1.2) why you put the
- 11 claim? (1.2) because you have problem in my- our country
- 12 SK yeah
- 13 R3 (.) if have in your country problem (.) that's why you get claim here, after that (1.2) I
- 14 don't think so I get any difficulties
- 15 SK okay

Before beginning the analysis of this extract, it is worth stating that, in their interviews, several of the interviewees stated that they had no or few difficulties; however, in the

same interviews they often described in detail some of the problems that they confronted. For instance, this particular interviewee described how his asylum claim had been rejected, meaning that he effectively had no legal right to remain in the country. Van den Berg (2003) has suggested that such contradictions may arise when speakers are involved in face-saving activities or when negotiating ideological dilemmas (Billig et al., 1988). In this instance, claiming not to face any difficulties may signal that the interviewee is negotiating the dilemma of being critical of the host society while avoiding seeming ungrateful and / or the way that discussing problems in the host society may undermine the credibility of his claim to have faced persecution in his country of origin.

The interview question includes the assumption that the interviewee has found some things difficult in the UK and the interviewee is being asked to state those things that have been ‘most difficult’ (l. 1). The delay and use of ‘u:h’ (l. 2) in responding to the question can be taken as an indication that the interviewee is about to give a dispreferred response, and as such the response involves an account for the rejection of the central premise of the question (Kitzinger & Frith, 1999). The use of ‘believe me’ (l. 2) provides the impression that the speaker is being honest, which also suggests an alternative view that would involve asylum seekers experiencing difficulties and yet being reluctant to admit to them. By voicing the perspective of others who may assume that asylum seekers have many difficulties in the UK – ‘people sorta think about that (.) that uh we have lot of difficulties here’ (ll. 4-5) – the speaker presents his perspective as reasoned, as an alternative view is acknowledged. However the reporting of this view allows the interviewee to evaluate this and forward his own view on the topic (Buttny, 2003), beginning with ‘but I think’ (l. 5). The narrative that follows uses a contrast to make the case that he has no problems in the UK: ‘when I was in ((country of origin)) I have a lot of problems [...] I came here [...] I feel relaxed’ (ll. 5-8). As suggested by Van den Berg (2003), an apparent contradiction may be resolved through different constructions of concepts; in this case, difficulties are equated with ‘a lot of problems’ which is equated with the situation in his country of origin. This construction highlights the problems in his homeland, which emphasises his need to be in the UK and the



legitimacy of his asylum claim, while construing any issues he confronts in the UK as being relatively unproblematic in contrast. This could be seen as orienting to a potential counterargument (Billig, 1996): if the interviewee had suggested he faced many problems in the UK it could imply the alleged dangers he fled were not actually so bad, undermining the seriousness of his asylum claim or even suggesting that he should return to his country of origin.

The logic of this argument is explicated in lines 8-14: the reason someone makes an asylum claim is that they have problems in their own country; if they have problems in their own country and they are now in the UK then they can no longer have any problems. The implication is that if someone has problems in the UK then they must not have really had problems in their own country. This point is made by the rhetorical question in lines 10-11: ‘why you put the claim?’ The phrasing suggests that it is addressed to an asylum seeker, and the obvious answer - ‘because you have problem in my- our country’ (l. 11) – implies that by logical extension any legitimate asylum claim would deny the possibility of someone experiencing problems in the UK. Therefore the claim by interviewees that they do not experience difficulties in the UK – and any ways in which this may seem to contradict any statements to the contrary – can be understood as evidencing a dilemma (Billig et al., 1988) in terms of citing difficulties in the UK while maintaining a credible case for needing to be in the country, which could also be extended to the problem of apparent ‘complaining’ while expressing gratitude for the potential provision of safety from persecution.

In addition to illustrating how asylum seekers may orient to the dilemma of discussing difficulties in their host society, this extract demonstrates some important issues in relation to place-identity (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005). Here, the construction of the host society and the country of origin work to mutually constitute each other: presenting the UK as being a place without difficulties and the country of origin as a place with many difficulties work to constitute the former as an appropriate place of refuge and the latter as a legitimate place from which to flee. Moreover, these constructions of place are constitutive of the speaker’s identity: he must be a genuine refugee as he fled problems in his own country and faces no problems now that he has

found safety in the UK. The careful negotiation of this dilemma and the related constructions of place therefore work together in order to legitimise the interviewee's presence in the host society.

The following extract from an interview with a refugee further illustrates how constructions of a refugee's country of origin may function to legitimise their presence in the host society through emphasising the danger that they fled. In common with extract 3, this extract comes from partway through the interviewee's discussion of his experiences in the UK. Before beginning the analysis of this extract, it is worth noting that interviewees were not specifically asked about their reasons for coming to the UK, the grounds for their asylum claims or about their experiences prior to arriving in the UK. Participants were told at the start of the interview that they would not be asked about these topics, as the interview would focus on their experiences in the UK; however they were told that if they wanted to mention these issues in the interview, because they thought they were important for me to understand their situation, then they should feel free to talk about them. As it turned out, all but two of the interviewees talked about the situation in their country of origin and / or their reasons for leaving, sometimes in detail and sometimes only obliquely. It makes sense that the interviewees chose to talk about this issue given how central this was to their current living situation, arguably more significant than for other migrants.

*Extract 4: Refugee 5*

- 1 R5 I (1.0) escape from my country, I have many problem (.)  
2 SK mm-hmm  
3 R5 with the government, the crazy government, ((interviewee's nationality)) (.) you  
4 know (0.6) they are Muslim, ↑I was Muslim before↓  
5 SK mm-hmm  
6 R5 but uh (2.5) I never (0.8) wanted to be a Muslim (0.8) because I know them (0.8)  
7 very well (2.8) they are very (1.0) I don't know what you call it (1.8) extremist? (1.2)  
8 SK okay

9 R5 yeah very (.) dangerous people in government (.)  
 10 SK right  
 11 R5 (.) I love my country but  
 12 SK mm-hmm  
 13 R5 (.) the problem (1.8) was the religious (.) government (.) I don't like them (.) and  
 14 (1.5) when I came ↑here (1.5) I convert my (0.8) religion from Muslim to Christianity  
 15 SK ah right okay=  
 16 R5 =the big problem (.) in ((country of origin)) if you (1.0) uh in ((country of origin)) or  
 17 some country (1.2) like Saudi Arabia like (0.6) Afghanistan, if you convert your  
 18 religion from Muslim to (.) Christianity  
 19 SK mm-hmm  
 20 R5 they kill you  
 21 SK right  
 22 R5 yeah (0.8) everybody knows the Sharia law  
 23 SK sure  
 24 R5 (1.0) they will kill (2.0) and also I had a big problem with the government (.) you  
 25 know very (1.0) political (.) problem with them (.)  
 26 SK okay  
 27 R5 (0.8) and I (1.8) finally (.) I could (.) escape from my country (.) come in here (1.5)  
 28 and ↑I am very happy↓ here

Characterising his leaving of his country of origin as 'escape' (l. 1) gives the impression that he was in danger and that it was difficult to leave, and could be contrasted with a more 'neutral' description of 'left' that does not communicate the need to flee. The reasons for leaving are described as 'many problem' (l. 1); stating that it was a number of issues highlights the severity of the situation. Also, describing the government as 'crazy' (l. 3) portrays it as irrational and even dangerous, in a way that goes against common understandings of the notion of government (e.g., fair, rational, considerate). The statements in lines 4 and 6 are of particular interest: 'they are Muslim, ↑I was Muslim before↓ [...] but uh (2.5) I never (0.8) wanted to be a Muslim'. The short narrative suggests that although the interviewee was affiliated with his country's religion

in the past he has now differentiated himself; the importance of stating that he ‘never wanted to be a Muslim’ is that otherwise the change in religion could be treated as a ‘fraudulent’ move in which someone changes their religion in order to give them grounds for asylum, so stating that he ‘never wanted to be a Muslim’ addresses this by suggesting this was always the case. In lines 7 and 9, the government is described as ‘extremist’ and as containing ‘dangerous people’; as argued by Hopkins & Kahani-Hopkins (2009), defining people as ‘extremists’ is a social action rather than a neutral description and so the use of this term by the interviewee can be understood as criticising the government and is implicitly linked to calling them ‘dangerous’ (l. 9). The construction of the interviewee’s country of origin, and in particular the government, therefore functions to portray it as problematic and thus as justification for him having to leave.

In line 11, saying ‘I love my country but’ is important as it implicitly counters arguments against the legitimacy of his asylum claim; that is, if he did not ‘love’ his country then he may have simply left because he wanted to live somewhere better, rather than because he was forced to leave. In his construction, ‘loving’ his country functions as a counter disposition (Edwards, 2007) suggesting he would not leave it voluntarily, and the section following ‘but’ - ‘the problem (1.8) was the religious (.) government’ (l. 13) – portrays the problem with the political situation as being the only explanation and cause for him having to leave. The danger is further emphasised in lines 17-24: ‘if you convert your religion from Muslim to (.) Christianity [...] they kill you [...] everybody knows the Sharia law [...] they will kill’. Here the danger is not stated as a possibility, but rather as a fact (twice): ‘they will kill’. Furthermore, by suggesting that ‘everybody knows the Sharia law’, the danger is construed as something that is indisputable and widely known, rather than, say, questionable and obscure (Pomerantz, 1986); this further emphasises the factuality of the danger and therefore the legitimacy of his need for asylum.

Lines 27-28 complete the narrative by linking it back to his present situation in the host society, which is the focus of the interview: ‘finally (.) I could (.) escape from my country (.) come in here (1.5) and ↑I am very happy↓ here’. Contextualising his

current situation within a narrative of the problems and dangers of his country of origin works to portray it as legitimate. That is, his satisfaction is presented as resulting from having successfully escaped the problems in his country of origin, rather than stemming from simply moving to the UK in order to improve his general living conditions. This extract therefore illustrates how constructions of the country of origin, and particularly dangerous practices and agents, as well as constructions about the speaker's dispositions (e.g., never wanting to be Muslim, loving the country) function to present the speaker as compelled to flee and to emphasise the impossibility of return, thereby legitimising their presence in the host society.

The next extract from a refugee similarly illustrates how constructions of the country of origin function to legitimise the speaker's presence in the host society. Moreover, it illustrates how the construction of the country of origin and the host society work together to mutually constitute the speaker's identity, not just in terms of their asylum claim but also in terms of their life more generally. This extract comes at a point in the interview after the interviewee has spoken about how he lost several of his teeth due to being attacked in Glasgow and follows a question about what good experiences he has had in the UK.

*Extract 5: Refugee 9*

- 1 R9 always no matter what happens to me
- 2 SK mmm
- 3 R9 (0.5) I look on the bright side
- 4 SK mmm
- 5 R9 yeah because I mean at least I'm alive (.)
- 6 SK mmm
- 7 R9 and (.) as also (.) uh if I look on the (1.0) the th- (0.5) the best (0.6) bright side (0.8)
- 8 that's (.) I mean in the war (0.6) in ((country of origin)) (.) I've been through (1.2)
- 9 and people were dying on my hands
- 10 SK °yeah°=

11 R9 =people I know, people I don't know, people (.) just next to me, people that don't  
 12 (press for) me (.) so (.) I've seen a lot (.) my own family, most of them they got (0.8)  
 13 SK °jeez yeah°  
 14 R9 so at least also one other thing I'm happy is I'm alive (.)  
 15 SK yeah  
 16 R9 so today (0.8) no matter what happened to me  
 17 SK mmm=  
 18 R9 =in in here or in ((country of origin)) or  
 19 SK [mmm]  
 20 R9 [((country of origin))] (0.8) or whatever happened (.) to my teeth  
 21 SK mm-hmm  
 22 R9 (.) I say this this this I recover it back (.)  
 23 SK mmm=  
 24 R9 =I can recover from this (.)  
 25 SK yeah  
 26 R9 and every uh t- the way I look at today is every day I wake up is a beautiful day for  
 27 me  
 28 SK right yeah  
 29 R9 (.) yeah so (0.6) so no matter what (.)  
 30 SK yeah  
 31 R9 and nobody, no matter what they do to me (.)  
 32 SK yeah  
 33 R9 can stop what I'm doing

Stating 'always no matter what happens to me [...] I look on the bright side' (ll. 1-3) positions the interviewee as playing in active role in evaluating his life circumstances; although he may not have control over 'what happens' to him, he presents himself as being in control over how he views the things that have happened and as therefore being able to view his life positively. In particular, this view is worked up through the contrast of 'at least I'm alive' (l. 5) and his account of life threatening events in his country of origin. The horror and danger of the events he lived through in his country of origin are worked up through vivid descriptions of death that are nearby to him: 'people were

dying on my hands [...] people (.) just next to me' (ll. 9-11). Furthermore, the indiscriminate nature of the killing is construed by the list of those who were killed, which is made out to include anyone: 'people I know, I people I don't know' (l. 11). In line 12, stating that his own family was affected conveys both the loss he has suffered and the possibility of himself being a potential victim. Although the interview is not explicit about members of his family being killed, this can be inferred from the surrounding context of talking about death and the contrast with the interviewee being 'happy' to be 'alive' (l. 14). The danger is therefore presented as being imminent, as it was indiscriminate and affected people who were close to him physically as well as in terms of their relationships.

This extract is particularly interesting as the very negative experiences are used as a contrast to present his current situation as positive. That is, given the descriptions of violence in his country of origin, stating 'one other thing I'm happy is I'm alive' (l. 14) functions to emphasise the seriousness of the danger through portraying the alternative as *not* being alive, while also presenting his current situation as positive precisely because he is alive. This means that his situation is positive even though negative events happened in his country of origin (ll. 16-18) and in his host society (l. 20). In a similar way to the previous extracts, the contrast between the events in his country of origin and being happy in Glasgow adds legitimacy to his need for asylum; the implication is that if someone can suffer a violent attack and still be positive, the situation they fled must be really bad.

This provides some insight into the dilemma that refugees and asylum seekers face in the UK: complaining about their situation in the host society may potentially undermine the seriousness of the circumstances they fled, so presenting their current situation as positive, despite negative events, works to legitimise their presence. Furthermore, positioning himself as being 'happy to be alive' provides a sense of agency and control in the face of seemingly uncontrollable events, allowing him to be positive despite the violence that has occurred both in his country of origin and his host society. To some extent this is consistent with the research of Verkuyten (2005a) and Colic-

Peisker (2005), as it illustrates how denying or downplaying the existence of problems functions to portray the speaker as having a legitimate place in society.

Overall the analyses of these extracts illustrated how they may function to justify the presence of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK through highlighting the reality of the danger they face in their countries of origin. They also showed how the concept of place-identity (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000) is useful for understanding how constructions of place and constructions of identity are mutually constitutive and closely related to the legitimisation of the presence of refugees. More specifically, constructing refugees' countries of origin as being dangerous or full of problems and constructing the host society as relatively problem-free functioned to portray refugees as having a legitimate need for asylum and the UK as being an appropriate place of refuge. For instance, presenting the danger as serious and imminent – particularly through construing it as a realistic threat to life – justified refugees' presence in the UK through suggesting it was the only option for staying alive. The next section similarly looks at how constructions of place and identity are mutually constitutive and work to justify the presence of refugees, this time through the benefits they are said to bring rather than the dangers from which they have fled.

### **Places that benefit from asylum seekers**

Whereas the arguments presented above focused on the dangers that asylum seekers and refugees face in their countries of origin in order to justify their presence in the UK, this section analyses arguments that are based on the benefits that asylum seekers and refugees may bring to the UK. As mentioned above, Every (2008) suggested that discussion around asylum seekers and refugees may engage with the dilemma regarding 'duty to others' and 'costs to self'. In this case, whereas the previous section implicitly related to the 'duty to others', this section relates more to the 'costs to self', yet actually reconstructs this end of the dilemma so that potential costs are reconstrued as potential benefits. While the first set of arguments relates to ethical standards and duties, the second set of arguments construct the issue more in terms of costs and benefits to be



weighed against each other and focus on the needs of the host society rather than the needs of the asylum seekers and refugees. This section will further illustrate how these arguments involve mutually constituting constructions of place and identity (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000). In this regard and as suggested by Boswell (2005), arguments in favour of the presence of asylum seekers and refugees may stand a better chance of being accepted if they are portrayed as being in the national interest (see also Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Such arguments were particularly prevalent in the interviews with professionals and these specific extracts were chosen to illustrate how interviewees talked about a range of potential benefits of asylum seekers and refugees, including contributions through paid work, the impact in schools, volunteering and in terms of bringing families to local communities.

The first extract in this section relates to the benefits refugees may bring in terms of paid employment. It comes partway through the interviewee's response to the question 'what difference do you think it makes having asylum seekers and refugees here to the local community or to wider society?' It follows the interviewee highlighting the positive influences that asylum seekers and refugees have in schools.

*Extract 6: Professional 2*

- 1 P2 I also think that (1.2) um (.) they (1.0) lead to the level of competition in the
- 2 community (.) and they they most of those who are in in in in nursing, most of those
- 3 who are in in doing care jobs that (.) ordinary British would normally want to go and
- 4 take their benefits and sit (.) and would not want to go and clean that old man's (1.0)
- 5 uh (.) f- faeces or mess somewhere (.) these are done by (1.5) asylum seekers who
- 6 have (1.0) grown up (1.0) in environments where people succeed through hard work
- 7 and they don't sit and hold their hands and say the state takes care of me

In this extract, the interviewee begins by framing the benefits that asylum seekers and refugees bring as 'leading to the level of competition in the community' (ll. 1-2). It is worth noting that he then goes on to 'unpack' this concept so it is made clear that this is

a beneficial aspect of their presence. In particular, he does this through making a contrast between asylum seekers and ‘ordinary British’ (l. 3) in which asylum seekers are willing to do jobs that British people would not. Giving a particular example of nursing and construing it in a way that makes it hearably undesirable – particularly through reference to cleaning ‘faeces’ (l. 5) – bolsters the idea that refugees are willing to work even in unpleasant contexts; in this way, their disposition towards ‘hard work’ (l. 6) is portrayed as so strong as to override other factors. Importantly, portraying asylum seekers as undertaking work that others are unwilling to do avoids the accusation that they are ‘taking jobs’ and rather suggests they are making an important contribution and filling a need in the employment sector.

Specifically, this is achieved through a contrast of two identities – ‘asylum seekers’ (l. 5) and ‘ordinary British’ (l. 3) – whereby essential characteristics are applied to each category and explained by environment factors in their country of origin: in this case, the presence or absence of a welfare system. This particular explanation has the added advantage of countering the accusation that asylum seekers come to the UK in order to avail themselves of the benefit system (e.g., Leudar et al., 2008); while the argument acknowledges the lack of a welfare state in many asylum seekers’ countries of origin, rather than this supporting the idea that asylum seekers come to the UK to gain benefits, it is turned around so that it becomes an explanation of exactly why asylum seekers are not disposed to relying on welfare. Whereas other arguments, such as the ‘standard story’ illustrated in extract 1, compare the UK with asylum seekers’ countries of origin in economic terms, and may thus imply asylum seekers are motivated by economic concerns due to the UK’s relative wealth and benefit system, here the construction has the opposite effect due to the dispositions associated with asylum seekers due to living in a country without a benefit system. In terms of place-identity (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005), here the UK and asylum seekers’ countries of origin are compared in a way that constitutes people’s identities as either willing or unwilling to undertake unpleasant work and this works to justify the presence of asylum seekers and their potential role in the UK job market.

The following extract was from a different interviewee, also in response to a question about what difference asylum seekers and refugees make to local communities and wider society. The extract follows the interviewee discussing the involvement of asylum seekers and refugees in volunteer work and focuses on the impact that they have in schools.

*Extract 7: Professional 10*

- 1 P10 the children tend to be (0.8) either from cultures where education is highly valued (.)  
2 therefore they behave at school or cultures where access to education was deprived  
3 (.) for whatever reason (.) therefore to get access to education (0.6) they really grab it  
4 with all hands  
5 SK right I see  
6 P10 (.) their um (1.0) their levels of attainment were pushing up school averages (.) their  
7 attendance was better (.) their behaviour was better, that was having a positive impact  
8 on their peers (.) and in some parts of Glasgow primary schools that were at risk of  
9 closure (0.6) got (.) to stay open coz there was now an influx of kids  
10 SK right=  
11 P10 =so that's better for the community

As with the previous extract, this extract draws upon notions of asylum seekers' countries of origin in order to construct asylum seekers in a particularly positive way that justifies their presence in the UK. More specifically, the interviewee constructed the countries in two opposing ways: 'cultures where education is highly valued [...] or cultures where access to education was deprived' (ll. 1-2). In this way, seemingly opposing forces which orient to the variety of contexts from which refugees come are claimed to have the same result: positive engagement in education. Here the three part list (Jefferson, 1991) – 'attainment', 'attendance' and 'behaviour' – gives the impression that asylum seeker children are better at school than local children in all ways. The asylum seeker children are thus presented as excelling in relation to education.

Although this may justify the presence of asylum seeking children through portraying them in a positive light, this does not, in itself, constitute an argument in terms of the benefits that asylum seekers bring to the community. Whereas the provision of education to asylum seekers could be seen as purely of benefit to the asylum seekers themselves, their engagement in education is turned into a benefit ‘for the community’ (l. 11) both through the ‘positive impact’ (l. 7) that this has on other students and through keeping schools open that may otherwise be closed (ll. 8-9).

In similar ways to the previous extract, this extract therefore illustrates how the presence of asylum seekers can be justified through constructing them as addressing issues in the local community; in this case, the educational performance of local children and the potential closure of schools. It is worth considering these constructions against the possible argumentative background; that is, the arguments that asylum seekers and refugees may ‘take’ jobs from locals, be a drain on the benefit system or take up places and resources in local schools (e.g., Capdevila & Callaghan, 2008; Lynn & Lea, 2003). These arguments tend towards portraying refugees and asylum seekers in negative ways – as acting unfairly or being lazy – while simultaneously undermining their right to be in the host society. In contrast, the discourse of the interviewees presents the asylum seekers and refugees in positive ways – as hardworking and well-behaved – while justifying their presence through emphasising the benefits they bring.

Whereas the previous two extracts have dealt with asylum seekers and refugees in work or education, the following extract addressed the issue of voluntary work, which orients to the fact that asylum seekers are currently barred from engaging in paid work in the UK and many struggle to find paid employment once they gain leave to remain (Smyth & Kum, 2010). This extract also comes partway through the interviewee’s response to a question about what difference asylum seekers and refugees make to local communities or wider society. It follows the interviewee explaining that resources were needed to support asylum seekers and refugees and that the resources could be used to help reinvigorate local communities.

*Extract 8: Professional 12*

- 1 P12 there's the: the fact that you've got a new generation of people who are time rich  
2 (1.0) in the asylum process (.) skilled (.) knowledgeable (0.8) and are keen to make  
3 (.) a contribution to the community they're living in while they're there  
4 SK okay  
5 P12 (1.0) uh in some areas you've seen folk take on roles in sort of generic community  
6 life (1.0) which (.) local community folk have seen as being positive, you know v-  
7 asylum seeking volunteers who get the volunteer of the year  
8 SK oh right  
9 P12 or become active in the housing association or (.) em do something that's of benefit  
10 for the whole community

This extract begins by portraying people who are in the asylum process as being ‘time rich’ (l. 1). This is an example of what Billig (1996, p. 83) refers to as ‘*witcraft*’: in this case, the rhetorical act of constructing something that has potentially negative connotations – i.e., being ‘unemployed’ or ‘idle’ (e.g., Leudar et al., 2008) – into a benefit. This type of construction is in line with proposals made by Zetter (1999), who suggested that asylum seekers should be treated as a resource rather than a drain on resources and as possessing agency rather than being dependent. This description is then built into a list of traits – ‘time rich’, ‘skilled’, ‘knowledgeable’ and ‘keen to make (.) a contribution’ (ll. 1-3) – that function to portray asylum seekers positively and as having all the attributes necessary to bring something of value to the community. This construction counters arguments that asylum seekers are a problem or drain on communities, and instead turns this into a benefit that justifies the presence of asylum seekers.

It is worth paying careful attention to the words that are used to refer to asylum seekers in this extract. As a point of contrast, some previous discursive research has illustrated that discourse can reinforce notions of ‘us and them’ (e.g., Lynn & Lee, 2003); that is, forms of categorisation and description that strongly differentiate between

asylum seekers and local people, emphasising differences rather than similarities. However, in this extract the interviewee refers to both asylum seekers and local Scottish people as ‘folk’ (ll. 5-6), which emphasises their commonalities and presents an informal notion of their identity that focuses on their ordinariness, avoiding categories that may problematise their presence or otherwise place them outside the community. Furthermore, constructing their volunteering activities as ‘tak[ing] on roles in sort of generic community life’ (ll. 5-6) emphasises their engagement within everyday aspects of the community, rather than, say, locating them outside of the community or presenting their activities as different from the norm. In this way the presence of asylum seekers in the community is normalised and legitimised.

It is worth considering this construction in the light of research by Reicher and Hopkins (2001), which suggested that the interests of the nation are the most legitimate grounds for action at the national level. Similarly, Boswell (2005) argued that support for asylum seekers would be best achieved by building a national identity that incorporated the value of providing assistance to those in need. In this and the previous two extracts, however, the relevant beneficiary is the ‘community’ rather than the nation. It is important to note that this is likely a result, at least to some extent, of the wording of the question, which specifically asked about what difference asylum seekers and refugees make to the ‘local community’ and ‘wider society’. However it is still notable that interviewees took up this conception when discussing the benefits brought by asylum seekers and refugees.

For instance, in the extract from Professional 12, it is important that the activities of asylum seekers are ‘seen as being positive’ by ‘local community folk’ (l. 6) as these are the natural constituents of the community and need to be presented as beneficiaries. Furthermore, when the extract ends with the interviewee stating that asylum seekers may ‘do something that’s of benefit for the whole community’ (ll. 9-10), the normalisation of their presence functions in such a way that the group ‘whole community’ can be heard as including asylum seekers, as both them and other residents are the ‘folk’ of which the community is composed. This works to overcome ‘zero-sum’ arguments about the diversion of community resources to asylum seekers, as asylum seekers are presented as

part of the community and benefits to one equate to benefits for all. Overall then, this extract takes the potential problem of asylum seekers' unemployment and reconstrues it as a benefit for the community while portraying the asylum seekers as part of the local community in a way that aligns their interests with other local people and thereby legitimises their presence.

The final extract in this section continues with the topic of the benefits asylum seekers bring and particularly how this impacts on the local community. It also deals with the construction of place and its relation with the categorisation of people in justifying the presence of asylum seekers and refugees. The extract is from an interview with a local Scottish person who is also involved in volunteering for an organisation that supports asylum seekers, refugees and other members of the local community. It comes during her discussion of her role in supporting asylum seekers.

*Extract 9: Local 5*

- 1 L5 I always say that (0.7) this community (0.7) was brushed clean because we had quite  
2 a nasty (.) time wi' drug (1.1) drug abusers  
3 SK right=  
4 L5 =et cetera (0.8) and when we got the asylum seekers (.) to me (.) it was family again  
5 (0.7)  
6 SK okay  
7 L5 they came all right from all over different places and there was language problems,  
8 yes (1.0) but they were so happy to get safety (1.0) and (0.5) the drug (.) dealers (.)  
9 didn't get the flats, the asylum seekers got the flats so (.) me personally I was very  
10 happy  
11 SK right=  
12 L5 =very happy (0.9) but (1.2) then the centre had a big job of (1.0) helpin' those people  
13 settle

This extract presents the arrival of asylum seekers as a benefit to the area through the use of a temporal narrative regarding their arrival and the contrast between them and

other previous residents. In particular, saying that ‘this community (0.7) was brushed clean’ (l. 1) implies that the previous residents, or problems associated with those residents, could be considered ‘dirty’ or unwanted. This is strengthened through the describing the previous state as ‘quite a nasty (.) time’ (ll. 1-2) which emphasises how unpleasant it was to have these problems in the area. More specifically, the problems are described as relating to ‘drug abusers [...] et cetera’ (ll. 2-4); this term is loaded with negative connotations, and combined with the implications of being not ‘clean’ and being nasty, the presence of drugs abusers is portrayed as an undesirable aspect of the community.

In contrast to the ‘drug abusers’, asylum seekers are presented as constituting ‘family’ (l. 4). In the context of asylum policy, Goodman (2007) illustrated that portraying asylum seekers as ‘families’ can have a range of functions. In particular, Goodman illustrated that it not only has generally positive connotations, which supports their presence, but that it can also function to criticise asylum policies that would separate the children of asylum seekers from their parents through constructing them as a natural unit that should not be broken. Similarly, in this extract the contrast between ‘families’ and ‘drug abusers’ – rather than, say, ‘asylum seekers’ and ‘locals’ – functions to present the asylum seekers as having a legitimate place in the community in a way that the ‘drug abusers’ do not. In the light of place-identity (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000), the constructions of place (‘community’) and identity (‘families’) work together to legitimise the presence of asylum seekers while arguing against the presence of certain others. This is particularly interesting as it avoids categorising people in terms of their nationality, whereby people from a certain country may have a natural right to reside there, and instead draws on other attributes in relation peoples’ presence, so that people who might otherwise be described as ‘locals’ are actually portrayed as not belonging in a part of the host society.

Briefly, it is worth acknowledging the way in which the interviewee also refers to problems that were associated with the presence of asylum seekers; specifically, she mentioned ‘they came all right from all over different places and there was language problems’ (l. 7) and ‘the centre had a big job of (1.0) helpin’ those people settle’ (ll. 12-



13). Although this could be seen as arguing against their presence, there are at least two other ways of understanding the functions of these statements. In one sense, these can be treated as adding an element of ‘realism’ into the interviewee’s discourse; that is, rather than idealising asylum seekers, which could leave the speaker open to criticism, she engages with the dilemma of ‘costs to self’ and ‘duty to others’ (Every, 2008) by acknowledging the support that was required but balancing this against the benefits so as to justify their presence: ‘I was very happy’ (ll. 9-10). A second, yet complementary, way of understanding this is as a way of highlighting the necessity of ‘the centre’ (l. 12), which also serves as a preamble to a discussion of the various activities engaged in by the interviewee and the centre in terms of supporting and settling asylum seekers. This highlights the complexity involved in constructing asylum seekers in ways that justify their presence and how these constructions may function not only in relation to asylum seekers but also people who work with asylum seekers in order to justify their own activities.

Overall, the extracts in this section show how the presence of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK can be justified not just in terms of ethical obligations and the reality of persecution, but also through highlighting the benefits that asylum seekers bring to the host society. Interestingly, whereas other research has looked at the way in which particular arguments can be justified through making them appear in line of the national interest (e.g., Every & Augoustinos, 2008; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001), here they could be justified through making them in the interests of the local community. This shows how the relevant constituency may change depending on the local context of the discussion; as the asylum seekers were dispersed to Glasgow, and to specific areas within the city, it is the people or communities of these areas that are of most relevance, at least in the immediate context of the interviews. As with the previous research, the notion of place-identity (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005) was relevant to the arguments, as constructions of place were implicated in the constructions of identity both in terms of asylum seekers and in terms of certain members of the local population, and these worked together to justify the presence of asylum seekers. The next section of this chapter continues this focus on the construction of place and identity, but does so by

analysing the ways in which some Scottish locals argued against the presence of asylum seekers.

### **Places that are unable to support asylum seekers**

Although most of the interviewees talked about asylum seekers and refugees in ways that justified their presence in the UK, some of the Scottish locals who were interviewed argued against their presence or argued that they received too much support. As all constructions can be taken to be explicit or implicit arguments against alternatives (Billig, 1996), the analysis of these counter arguments provides a deeper understanding of how people argue for or against the presence of asylum seekers and refugees. Moreover, it contributes to previous research that has focused on ‘racist discourse’ (e.g., Augoustinos, Tuffin & Rapley, 1999; LeCouteur & Augoustinos, 2001; Nairn & McCreanor, 1991; Tuffin, 2008; van Dijk, 1993; Wetherell & Potter, 1992) and discourse that justifies the exclusion of asylum seekers and refugees (e.g., Capdevila & Callaghan, 2008; Every, 2008; Goodman, 2008; Lynn & Lea, 2003). As yet, no discursive research on asylum seekers and refugees has drawn on the concept of place-identity (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005) in order to understand these discourses. Given that this played an important role in the extracts analysed earlier in this chapter, which justified the presence of asylum seekers and refugees in the host society, it seems reasonable that this should also figure in arguments against their presence. This section therefore addresses this gap by paying careful attention to the ways in which people may construct certain versions of places and identity in order to challenge the legitimacy of providing asylum.

This first extract illustrates how the presence of asylum seekers may be criticised through developing particular constructions of the host society. The extract follows the interviewee talking about various aspects of the local community.

*Extract 10: Local 7*

- 1 SK ↑how was it↓ um when asylum seekers and refugees first (.) started arriving here, coz  
2 you said you know there was a (0.6) particular period a few years ago when (0.6) um  
3 most people came in  
4 L7 (.) when I when I think that when they got the houses, ya know (0.8) em (1.6) as I say  
5 there hhh (.) a lot of people were going oh (1.7) there they've got a furnished flat  
6 SK mm-hmm  
7 L7 (1.0) now you might have a son or a daughter or whatever just startin' up in life  
8 SK mmm  
9 L7 (.) ya know (.) who needs (0.6) a flat  
10 SK right  
11 L7 or whatever  
12 SK yeah  
13 L7 (0.9) but you don't get your furniture and you don't get (.) whatever  
14 SK right  
15 L7 ya know  
16 SK mmm  
17 L7 em (1.8) whether it be the right hhh (0.8) take on it or not I don't know  
18 SK mm-hmm  
19 L7 (.) but ↑it does make for envy↓, of ↑course it makes for envy↓  
20 SK sure  
21 L7 (0.8) of course it makes for envy (.) and I think the worst thing now is (1.8) we're all  
22 in a recession  
23 SK mmm  
24 L7 (2.0) and it's hard ya know  
25 SK yeah  
26 L7 it's hard to accept (1.0) people from another country  
27 SK yeah  
28 L7 when we're going through (.) the recession, we can't afford to do this and we can't  
29 afford to do that  
30 SK yeah

31 L7 (1.5) e:m so to take (0.9) refugees in (.) w- I think (1.6) my own opinion is (0.8) I  
 32 think we're (0.6) we're full to the gunnels  
 33 SK okay (.) right  
 34 L7 (0.9) and we cannae do it ya know we just (1.0) we can't do it  
 35 SK sure  
 36 L7 we can't do it

In this extract, the interviewee negotiates the dilemma that could be seen as at the heart of providing refuge to others: the provision of support to needy locals versus those from other countries (Every, 2008). This dilemma involves portraying the issue as a conflict over limited resources – a zero sum game within which any support provided to asylum seekers or refugees is a loss for some of the local people. One interesting aspect of this is the way that the allocation of resources is described as asylum seekers ‘getting’ things such as houses or money (ll. 4-5 & 13). This way of portraying it implies that it was provided with no effort – and therefore implying it was unfairly received – rather than, say, highlighting any needs that this was addressing. Here the interviewee uses direct speech – ‘oh (.) there they’ve got a furnished flat’ (l. 5) – using a form of footing (Goffman, 1981) to present the views of those locals as being at some distance from her own views. This type of voicing is often used in order to criticise the stated view (Buttny, 2003). In this instance it allows the speaker to put forth a potentially controversial view without immediately supporting it or disagreeing with it. The interviewee then depicts a situation and encourages the interviewer to put themselves in the position of the ‘disadvantaged’ local. Importantly, the construction stresses the ‘needs’ of the imagined son or daughter, which are implied to be at least equivalent to the needs of asylum seekers, therefore making the allocation of resources to asylum seekers rather than locals appear as unfair.

Interestingly, this presentation allows the interviewee to avoid giving clear support or disagreement with this view at this point: ‘whether it be the right hhh (0.8) take on it or not I don’t know’ (l. 17). Rather than deal with whether this perspective is ‘right’ or not, the interviewee states the negative effect this has – ‘↑it does make for

envy↓' (l. 19) – and by prefacing this with 'but', the negative effect is seen to have more sway than the moral question regarding the provision of support to asylum seekers. Furthermore, repeating this effect three times and beginning with 'of course' (ll. 19-21) gives the impression of the inevitability of the negative effect this allocation of resources has on the emotions of locals. In this way the provision of support to asylum seekers is constructed as problematic while allowing the interviewee to distance herself from a view on asylum seekers that may in itself be seen as problematic.

It is worth noting that the interviews took place in the years following a recession in the UK, related to the global financial crisis of 2008. Although the recession ended at the beginning of 2010, months before the interviews were undertaken, the notion of the recession and related pressure on employment and public spending are potentially available discursive resources. This is illustrated by the interviewee stating 'the worst thing now is (1.8) we're all in a recession' (ll. 21-22). Although technically incorrect, reference to the recession draws on connotations related to limitations on public spending, framing what follows in such a way that all allocation of publicly funded resources can be made accountable. In this section, the use of the collective pronoun 'we' is arguably important as it appears to differentiate between those in the 'in group' and those outside it. Because reference is made to 'people from another country', as well as contemporary conventions around 'banal nationalism' (Billig, 1995), this 'we' can be heard as referring to British people (loosely defined) and therefore implies that public spending on people in this category takes priority over spending on people from other countries, including asylum seekers. As argued by Billig et al. (1988), discussions around the allocation of resources to 'foreigners' takes on a nationalistic tone that distinguishes between 'our' resources and 'their' preferential treatment. In this construction, stating 'we can't afford to do this and we can't afford to do that' (ll. 28-29) – which stands in for a general limitation on what British people can do, perhaps both with public and private funds – makes spending on others an impossibility. Indeed, the repetition of 'we cannae do it' / 'we can't do it' (ll. 34-36) trades on the ambiguity on whether this means something is not possible or simply should not be done, constructing the taking in of refugees as both impossible and not the right course.

This argument also involves a certain construction of the country: ‘we’re full to the gunnels’ (l. 32). As argued by Durrheim and Dixon (2005), particular constructions of place may justify the presence or exclusion of particular groups of people through the notion of ‘place-identity’. In this case, the construction of the UK as ‘full’ reinforces the impossibility of allowing refugees to enter the country. Here the economic and spatial constructions merge in a way that makes the exclusion of non-nationals appear as the only possible outcome. This closely parallels some British National Party discourse – a political party known for its strong opposition to immigration – who have opposed providing asylum through portraying the UK as an ‘overcrowded island’ (Goodman & Speer, 2007, p. 177). Similarly, Grillo (2005), in studying resistance to the housing of asylum seekers in an English town, illustrated that residents’ arguments often relied upon portraying the town as being incompatible with the presence of asylum seekers or otherwise unable to support them. This is in direct contrast to constructions such as that illustrated in extract 2, which presents the UK as an appropriate place of refuge through constituting it as having an absence of problems.

Overall then this extract illustrates how the provision of asylum may be criticised through constructing the UK as having no capacity to accept people to enter the country as well as presenting local people as having priority in terms of having access to the limited publicly funded resources. It is worth noting that the interviewee distanced herself from some of the potentially controversial arguments she presented in this extract. In contrast, the following extract demonstrates the speaker taking ownership over views that argue against the presence of asylum seekers and refugees. Moreover, it illustrates how someone deals with the potential for such views to be treated as racist and how they may conflict with ethical obligations to those in need. This extract is in response to a question about the contact that the interviewee has had with asylum seekers and refugees; some of the interview has been omitted for reasons of space.

*Extract 11: Local 10*

- 1 L10 I've had no (2.2) no actual problems with them  
2 SK mm-hmm=  
3 L10 =whatsoever  
4 SK yep  
5 L10 (1.0) on a sorta (0.8) contact basis you know  
6 SK yep  
7 L10 em (3.2) sometimes I get- (1.0) d'ya- (.) total honesty here yeah? (0.8) sometimes I  
8 do get annoyed em (0.8) when I see what my parents (0.8) have to (0.9) pay for (0.8)  
9 SK okay  
10 L10 (.) and (.) things like that and (1.5) like so my son was out of work there for about a  
11 year  
12 SK °mm-hmm°  
13 L10 and couldn't get work and (1.0) yet they seemed to (1.9) I'm not a racist by any  
14 means but (0.7) ya sometimes wonder well (2.0) why (.) can they come in and get  
15 employment and (0.8) people are struggling (.)  
16 SK okay  
17 L10 here, ya know what I mean (.) I'm very much (0.9) look after your own first (.)  
18 SK right  
19 L10 (.) and then (1.0) certainly (.) if people need help (.)  
20 SK right  
21 L10 give them it  
22 ((1min 8secs omitted))  
23 L10 but I just feel that they get (0.9) a lot more support (.) and a lot more help (0.7) from  
24 the government  
25 SK right  
26 L10 and that's not (.) their fault (1.0) do you know what I mean? (0.7) em (0.5) when ya  
27 see things on (0.7) the telly like they have to leave (1.0) their countries (1.0) coz of  
28 the deprivation or (1.1) ya know (1.7) whatever reason (.) em we just seem to take an  
29 awful lot more in (.)  
30 SK °okay°

31 L10 and (.) give a lot more out (.)  
 32 SK right  
 33 L10 do ya know what I mean?  
 34 SK °okay°  
 35 L10 em (1.0) I mean I think (.) last week alone (0.9) we gave fifty two million (0.8)  
 36 pounds (1.7) away (.)  
 37 SK °right°  
 38 L10 and there's you know (2.5) and I think that the way they do it (1.0) in such a way that  
 39 even (1.0) I give (.) money (0.6) because (0.8) it's children dying I mean ya know  
 40 (0.7) nobody can (1.7) nobody wants a child to lose their life, do you know what I  
 41 mean?=  
 42 SK =yeah  
 43 L10 (.) and I sometimes wonder well what's their own government (1.2) doing about it

Local 10 begins her response by discussing the contact she has had with asylum seekers and refugees, and constructs this positively by stating that she has 'had no (2.2) actual problems with them [...] whatsoever' (ll. 1-3). However, at various points in the rest of the extract she discusses problems she has with aspects relating to the allocation of resources or access to employment or support. For instance, she says she gets 'annoyed' at what her parents 'have to (0.9) pay for' (l. 8); she says her son 'couldn't get work and (1.0) yet they seemed to' (l. 13); and she asks 'why (.) can they come in and get employment and (0.8) people are struggling' (ll. 14-15). This account is given an appearance of realism through references to specific people in her family. Within this discussion, she orients to the possibility of such comments being racist and attempts to address this through the presentation of a denial: 'I'm not a racist by any means' (ll. 13-14). In this way she separates out a positive assessment of the asylum seekers and refugees from the problems she has with their alleged ability to access various forms of resources more easily than members of her family or other local people. On this point, Hanson-Easey and Augoustinos (2011) argued that the disclaimer 'I'm not racist' is notable for its *ineffectiveness* in denying prejudice, and they illustrated that



demonstrating sympathy towards asylum seekers may be used by speakers to produce complaints while attempting to avoid seeming racist.

Similar constructions have been found in research on discourse on indigenous rights, whereby positive statements are made alongside arguments against the allocation of resources to an ethnic minority (Kirkwood et al., 2005; Sibley, Liu & Kirkwood, 2006). This allows the speaker to deny being racist – an accusation that could follow from a general negative assessment of asylum seekers and refugees – and instead present an argument against the presence of asylum seekers and refugees based on the more ‘reasonable’ grounds of concern about the fair distribution of support. In particular, this draws on the implicit argument that a nation’s resources are primarily for nationals of that country, as she says: ‘look after your own first [...] and then (1.0) certainly (.) if people need help [...] give them it’ (ll. 17-21). As with the previous extract, the possessive way in which nationhood is constructed – ‘your own’ (l. 17) – presents this argument as having a commonsensical logic. Furthermore, by presenting this as an issue regarding priority, rather than absolute limits, the argument acknowledges potential ethical obligations to those in need. In this way, the interviewee criticises the provision of support to asylum seekers and refugees while managing the issue of being seen as racist.

The interviewee further manages this issue by shifting responsibility away from individual asylum seekers: ‘that’s not (.) their fault’ (l. 26). She then goes on to highlight the source of the problem: ‘they have to leave (1.0) their countries (1.0) coz of the deprivation or (1.1) ya know (1.7) whatever reason’ (ll. 27-28). This is interesting as it shows similarities with the extracts in the first section of this chapter that emphasised the problems in asylum seekers’ countries of origin and thereby justified their presence in the UK by implying a lack of choice; that is, the construction of place simultaneously constituted the identity of asylum seekers and in need. However, while the responsibility is moved away from asylum seekers themselves, the interviewee still argues against the provision of asylum through suggesting the number of asylum seekers permitted into the country and the amount of resources provided by the UK is too generous: ‘we just seem to take an awful lot more in [...] and (.) give a lot more out’ (ll. 28-31). Therefore, the

interviewee is able to criticise the overall policy of providing this level of asylum while attempting to avoid accusations of racism by denying negative evaluations of asylum seekers and refugees themselves.

As highlighted by Every (2006), the construction of the nation as ‘generous’ is actually used to argue against the presence of asylum seekers and refugees, and works because it also combats the suggestion that the country is not fulfilling its ethical obligation to help those in need. This is illustrated in lines 35-36 – ‘I think (.) last week alone (0.9) we gave fifty two million (0.8) pounds (1.7) away’ – which suggests the UK is donating a hearably large sum of money to those in need. (The interviewee was referring to international aid money from the UK which had been recently mentioned in the media.) Moreover, this is presented as a being a cause that is worthy of being given resources, as the interviewee constructs it as ‘children dying’ (l. 39) and suggests that ‘nobody wants a child to lose their life’ (l. 40). As argued by Goodman (2007), this type of construction draws on the connotations of children as innocent and in need of protection and therefore works to bolster both the reality of the danger in these countries as well as the ethical obligations when it comes to protecting children regardless of their nationality. However, the interviewee again references the argument that resources from a nation should go to members of that nation by stating: ‘I sometimes wonder well what’s their own government (1.2) doing about it’ (l. 43). This shifts responsibility off the UK to some extent, placing it on asylum seekers’ countries of origin, while still acknowledging the dangers that people face.

This extract therefore illustrates how speakers may orient to the potential for negative statements about asylum seekers and refugees to be treated as racism. The speaker deals with this by voicing generally positive views about asylum seekers and refugees while being critical about the UK’s policies of allocating support and resources. Moreover, she acknowledged the dangers that people may face in their countries of origin and yet criticised the provision of support (to some extent) by emphasising the UK’s generosity in terms of giving assistance and by implying that the governments of other countries had a responsibility towards their own citizens.

## Conclusions

This first empirical chapter has focused on a fundamental issue relating to asylum seekers and refugees: arguments justifying or opposing their presence in the host society. These arguments could be seen within the liberal dilemma relating to ‘costs to self’ and ‘duty to others’ (Every, 2008). In this sense, the analysis of interview extracts illustrated how justifications for the presence of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK could focus on the ‘duty to others’ through highlighting the dangers that exist in asylum seekers’ countries of origin and therefore the obligation and appropriateness for the UK to provide asylum. Alternatively, some of the extracts illustrated how the ‘costs to self’ could be inverted in a way that portrayed asylum seekers and refugees as bringing benefits to the host society in the arenas of employment, education, voluntary work or the community, thereby justifying their presence. In terms of opposing the presence of asylum seekers and refugees, the analysis illustrated how this could be done by focusing on the ‘costs to self’ and thereby arguing that scarce resources should be allocated to locals in need rather than to people from other countries and / or shifting the responsibility onto the governments of asylum seekers’ countries of origin.

Durrheim and Dixon’s (2005) concept of place-identity is particularly useful for understanding how these different arguments were put together. For instance, the ‘standard story’ presented in extract 1 portrayed the UK and asylum seekers’ countries of origin in economic terms – the UK as rich and asylum seekers’ countries as poor – which in turn constituted asylum seekers as ‘selfish’ and motivated by economic reasons, thus undermining the legitimacy of their claims for asylum (see also Leudar et al., 2008; Lynn & Lea, 2003). In contrast, the arguments in favour of asylum seekers tended to portray countries in terms of their problems or dangers; that is, asylum seekers’ countries of origin were portrayed as being dangerous whereas the UK was portrayed as safe and problem-free. This constituted asylum seekers as being legitimately in need of asylum and the UK as being an appropriate place of asylum. In the second section, asylum seekers and refugees were portrayed as having a range of positive traits – such as being hardworking, skilled and successful at school – which

were attributed to their countries of origin and functioned to justify their presence. Moreover, these were related to particular constructions of the host society, including job vacancies that British people were unwilling to fill, schools that would otherwise shut and communities previously host to drug users. This demonstrated that notions of place and identity are intimately related so that the way in which asylum seekers, their countries of origin, the host society and certain members of the local population are constructed may mutually constitute each other.

These constructions played a particularly interesting role in terms of the accounts provided by asylum seekers and refugees themselves. Specifically, it appeared that they had to manage a dilemma in terms of the contradiction between talking about issues they faced and avoiding complaining about their current situation. In this regard, constructing the host society as relatively problem-free and their country of origin as full of problems or dangers worked to constitute their own identity as a legitimate refugee. Moreover, constructing their situation in this way may also function to portray themselves as having a legitimate place in the host society and having a sense of agency (Colic-Peisker, 2005; Verkuyten, 2005), a theme which will be picked up again in the next chapter.

Constructions of place also played a role in the arguments against the presence of asylum seekers. For instance, portraying the UK as ‘full’ and drawing on commonsense notions that a nation’s resources should be allocated to its citizens functioned to construct the host nation in such a way that asylum seekers and refugees were portrayed as not belonging or not entitled to support. It was interesting to note that interviewees did not necessarily undermine the legitimacy of asylum seekers’ claims, unlike in previous research (e.g., Lynn & Lea, 2003), and could instead acknowledge the danger that asylum seekers faced in their own countries; however, by constructing the UK as ‘full’, the provision of asylum was presented as an impossibility despite the ethical concerns. Interviewees could also orient to the potential for their statements to be treated as racism; this issue could be dealt with by making positive evaluations of asylum seekers themselves while criticising asylum policy and resource allocation (see also Kirkwood et al., 2005).

It is worth noting that other researchers have suggested that policies are more likely to find support if articulated as being consistent with the national character (e.g., Boswell, 2005; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). However, in at least some of the extracts, the 'local community' was taken as the most important constituency, so that the presence of asylum seekers and refugees could be supported by presenting it as benefiting this group. This was likely influenced by the interview questions, which specifically asked about the local community, but also highlights the way in which the relevant constituency can change depending on the local context. Furthermore, rather than supporting further generosity to asylum seekers, portraying the host society as generous may actually function to discredit the provision of asylum through suggesting that the country has already done enough or done too much (Every, 2006). Therefore, while the construction of the nation is relevant for arguments relating to asylum, this relationship may be relatively complex.

As stated near the beginning of this chapter, the definition of a refugee relies on the notion of a 'well-founded fear of being persecuted' (UNHCR, 2007, p. 16), so that a refugee's legitimacy is closely linked to the portrayal of their country of origin as being unsafe and the host society as being an appropriate place of refuge. This means that a discursive struggle over constructions of the host society and countries of origin is at the very heart of the legitimisation of refugees. This struggle, as illustrated in this chapter, is evident in historical studies of public discourse on refugees (e.g., Kushner & Knox, 1999) as well as studies of more recent discourse (e.g., Every & Augoustinos, 2008a, 2008b). It is likely to impact on the way that refugees and asylum seekers are treated by members of the host society and also plays an important role in the refugee determination process itself (Hardy, 2003). Therefore place-identity plays an essential role in relation to asylum and is worthy of further investigation.

This chapter has illustrated the ways that discourse may function in relation to arguments about the presence of asylum seekers in the UK and in particular the way that constructions of place are related to constructions of identity. These arguments are important as these constructions may have further consequences for the way that asylum seekers are treated in the local community and the development of asylum policy more

generally. For this reason, the next chapter investigates the way that relations between asylum seekers and members of the local community were constructed, particularly in terms of the way asylum seekers are perceived by the local community, racism and integration.



## Ch. 4. Relationships with the local population

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*We expected a land without war and, I suppose, a land without misery.*

-Dave Eggers (2006, p. 13) from the novel *What is the what: The autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng*

The previous chapter focused on discourse relating to the presence of asylum seekers and refugees, paying particular attention to the way that constructions of place were implicated in the construction of identity. This chapter moves on from the more abstract discussions relating to the legitimacy of refugees to relationships between the refugees / asylum seekers and members of the local population in the host society. In particular, this section focuses on the way that different groups and individuals are constructed and the various causal explanations that are produced. These constructions are important as they are likely to justify or challenge particular sets of social relations in the host society and therefore impact on asylum seekers' and refugees' experiences in Scotland.

Although distinct, these constructions are likely to be related to the arguments justifying or criticising the presence of asylum seekers and refugees. For instance, if asylum seekers are portrayed as coming to the UK for financial reasons, as in the 'standard story' described in extract 1 in the last chapter, then their relations with the local population may be construed in different ways than if they are portrayed as coming to the UK due to fleeing persecution, as in extract 2. The topic of the present chapter is therefore interrelated to the topics of the other empirical chapters.

This chapter focuses on three related aspects of relations with the local population: 1) public perception and the media; 2) racism and violence; and 3)



integration. The first section deals with the way interviewees talked about the way that the public views asylum seekers and refugees. This is important as it addresses how people account for the response to asylum seekers and refugees, particularly when this reaction is antagonistic. It also includes the role of the media as this was often mentioned by interviewees when discussing the public perception and therefore may be treated as inseparable. The different ways in which people account for these perceptions may legitimise or discredit them and may also imply different appropriate responses in terms of how antagonistic views may be addressed. This section is closely related to the focus of the previous chapter as the legitimisation of antagonistic views towards asylum seekers may function to argue against their presence whereas discrediting antagonistic views may work to legitimise their presence.

The next section moves on to address specific aspects of antagonism from the local population: racism and racially motivated violence. This topic is important for a number of reasons. Specifically, there has been little discursive research that has addressed minority group members' views on racism (for exceptions see Colic-Peisker, 2005; Verkuyten, 2005) and none to my knowledge that has analysed people's accounts of being a victim of racially motivated violence. Furthermore, racially motivated violence is a particularly severe response that has the potential to have a very negative impact on asylum seekers' and refugees' experiences in Scotland. It may also be treated as a sign of some locals' views regarding asylum seekers and refugees; that is, as not belonging in the host society and being a legitimate target for violence. As such, this section addresses an issue that is significant for understanding relations between asylum seekers and the host society more widely.

The final section of the chapter addresses the topic of 'integration', a concept that is central to understanding relations between asylum seekers / refugees and the local population, yet is often difficult to define (Castles et al., 2002). Following the example of Bowskill et al. (2007), I will approach this topic by focusing on the ways that people construct notions of integration and how they justify particular sets of social relations and imply certain forms of responsibility. Following the work of Durrheim and Dixon (2005), these constructions are not neutral but fulfil a variety of social functions. As yet

there has been limited research that has taken this approach to understanding integration and therefore this section addresses an empirical gap, particularly in relation to asylum seekers and refugees. The sections in this chapter therefore work together to provide a discursive analysis of relations between locals, asylum seekers and refugees that takes into account a variety of agents and perspectives.

## **Public perception and the media**

Previous research has found that public attitudes in the UK towards asylum seekers and refugees are characterised by ambivalence and can include open hostility (Kushner, 2006; Lewis, 2005, 2006). However it is not just these ‘attitudes’ that are important, but also the ways in which others respond to these views. That is, the justification of these views may function to discredit the legitimacy of asylum seekers and legitimise negative actions towards them. Moreover, the way in which they are constructed may justify particular policies for changing attitudes and / or allocate blame in particular ways. This section therefore begins by focusing on the way in which interviewees constructed and accounted for the public perception of refugees and asylum seekers. These extracts were selected as some of them were broadly representative of the ways that people portrayed this public perception. This section also deals with the role of the media, as this topic was commonly discussed in relation to the public perception. This first extract is broadly typical of many respondents’ interview responses to questions about the public’s views on asylum seekers and refugees in that it presents the public perception as being previously hostile but now much improved and suggests there is still an antagonistic minority whose views are influenced by ignorance.

*Extract 12: Professional 5*

- 1 SK how do you think the local community perceives asylum seekers and refugees?  
2 P5 (4.7) probably if you were goin' back the way (.) at the time (.) it was, they got  
3 everythin' (1.0) em (1.2) I don't think it's perceived like that noo (.)  
4 SK okay  
5 P5 they're part of the community  
6 SK right  
7 P5 (1.0) em (1.0) it might not be the way we would like it to be (1.2) but they are part of  
8 the community↑  
9 SK mm-hmm  
10 P5 and people have accepted that↑  
11 SK right yep  
12 P5 they're here (0.5) they have the- (.) they have other houses now (.) coz they've went  
13 from asylum seeker to refugee (.) as I say you still have your minority (.) that em  
14 (1.5) don't agree wi' people being here  
15 SK mm-hmm  
16 (0.8) but not even that, I think it's just that they're ignorant (.)  
17 SK right=  
18 P5 =and don't know the facts  
19 SK sure, okay  
20 P5 (1.0) but I do think the biggest majority of people are are (1.5) part of the community  
21 now

In lines 2-3, the interviewee draws on a perception, which was indeed very similar to the arguments put forth by locals in extracts 10 and 11 in the previous chapter, that 'they got everythin''. As previously discussed, this construction implies that the asylum seekers were easily and unfairly getting resources that might better be allocated to locals; voicing this position allows the speaker to distance herself from it and therefore present it as a position that may be criticised (Buttny, 2003). Moreover, the view is presented in a narrative that suggests this it was held by people in the past but is no longer held, and

this change is partly explained by stating ‘they’re part of the community’ (l. 5). Placing asylum seekers inside the notion of the community presents an alternative to a ‘them and us’ construction, whereby, for instance, resources that go to asylum seekers are portrayed as being wrongly allocated, and should instead be going to ‘locals’ who are part of the community (Lynn & Lea, 2003). Furthermore, it presents the interests of asylum seekers and ‘locals’ as coinciding through their joint position within the ‘community’, thus overcoming ‘zero sum’ presentations of the situation (see also extract 8). Embedded in this construction is the implication that the allocation of resources to people not from the community is potentially problematic; the speaker deals with this problem by presenting asylum seekers and refugees as belonging to the community.

The interviewee also discusses the ‘minority (.) that em (1.5) don’t agree wi’ people being here’ (ll. 13-14), thereby acknowledging the presence of an alternative view, but discrediting it to some extent by presenting it as a ‘minority’ and therefore lacking the legitimacy that comes with widespread support. Interestingly, the description is changed from those who ‘don’t agree wi’ people being here’ (l. 14) to ‘I think it’s just that they’re ignorant [...] and don’t know the facts’ (ll. 16 & 18). This changes this group of people from being those who have a fundamental view that is against the presence of asylum seekers and refugees to those who simply are not in possession of the full and accurate facts. This construction – common across many of the interviews – presents the dissenting minority as both less morally culpable for their views and as having the potential to change. Their moral culpability is reduced as there is an implication that if they did not have the necessary information then it is not their fault. Not having access to the facts also implies the potential for change, as gaining further information could lead people to change their views. In contrast, holding strong views against the presence of ‘foreigners’ when in possession of all the facts implies that the people are prejudiced and therefore responsible for such morally intolerant views or that asylum seekers and refugees really do not belong in the host society. Moreover, this construction works by implying that if people do have access to accurate information then they will accept asylum seekers and refugees as being part of their community; as with some of the extracts presented in the previous chapter, this presents the truth as

being that asylum seekers belong whereby the view that they do not belong is relegated to falsity.

Overall then this construction works by creating distance from and criticising the view that asylum seekers unfairly receive resources, constructing them as part of the community and therefore as legitimate recipients of support, and by undermining those who disagree with their presence by presenting them as a minority who are not in possession of the facts. The next extract develops a more complex explanation of negative public attitudes that also involves careful constructions of members of the public. This extract is the last third of the interviewee's response to the question 'how do you think asylum seekers and refugees are perceived by the local community or portrayed by the media?' The extract follows the interviewee discussing how the media portrayal has improved and the issues around the notion of economic migrants vis-à-vis asylum seekers. In this extract the interviewee makes reference to a previous comment he made (his 'historical analysis') about how racist conflict has been worse in the North of England compared with Scotland due to direct competition for jobs between immigrants and the local working class.

*Extract 13: Professional 12*

- 1 P12 I think there are major dangers that as uh the economic crisis really starts to bite
- 2 SK mm-hmm
- 3 P12 (1.0) that scapegoatin' (0.8) um:m reasserts itself (.) it's been good to see that the
- 4 organised right wing haven't been able to get a grip
- 5 SK right
- 6 P12 (0.5) uh and there doesn't seem to be much of a local (.) groundswell there
- 7 SK right
- 8 P12 (0.8) uh:h in the way that there h- there is in England and I think that maybe goes
- 9 back to that (.) s- (.) partly goes back to that historical
- 10 SK right
- 11 P12 (.) analysis

12 SK yeah

13 P12 (0.5) but what I do feel is if you were lookin' at a scenario where (0.8) there was

14 much more direct competition for work

15 SK mm-hmm

16 P12 (.) then I think (1.0) that the fulcrums of eh:h sort of development of negative

17 SK mmm

18 P12 (1.0) negative positions uh it doesn't take very much I don't think

19 SK right

20 P12 (.) our history tells us that (1.0) and therefore it's really important to keep investing

21 SK mmm

22 P12 something (.) in an infrastructure which is preventative and is=

23 SK =yeah

24 P12 (0.5) tryin' to help people understand what's really going on

25 SK yeah

26 P12 (.) you know

27 SK yep

28 P12 (.) coz there are some issues I mean you've got (1.0) a disenfranchised (1.2) some

29 would call it an underclass, not a term I like but=

30 SK =sure

31 P12 (.) of people who (.) are (.) so alienated from work that they (1.0) u:uh have stopped

32 looking

33 SK right

34 P12 (0.5) amongst the welfare poor

35 SK mmm

36 P12 (0.5) and then you've got an incoming group of migrants who might well be

37 competing for the same (1.2) in the same u:uh areas of uh (0.5) employment (.) what

38 have you (.) but who are incredibly motivated

39 SK right okay

40 P12 (.) now that might have an impact on who gets employed (1.0) you know and it (.)

41 you know (1.0) i:it could well be twisted into some kind of (1.0) you know uh fascist

42 eh heh=

43 SK =right

This extract is notable for its use of systematic vagueness, whereby being vague allows someone to provide an account while avoiding more specific details that may be vulnerable to challenge (Edwards & Potter, 1992). Moreover, here it particularly avoids making specific negative claims about the local population that could present the speaker as having a generally negative view of local people or being biased in favour of asylum seekers and refugees. For instance, suggesting that there is a danger ‘that scapegoatin’ (0.8) um:m reasserts itself’ (l. 3) places the agency on scapegoating itself, rather than on, say, members of the local population. The term ‘scapegoatin’ suggests that asylum seekers and refugees are not really to blame, but rather this blame is being displaced onto them undeservedly. Moreover, the connection to the ‘economic crisis’ (l. 1) implies that it plays some causal, or at least contextual, role in making this happen. Therefore, scapegoating is something that happens, partly as a result of the economic situation, but it is not suggested that this is something that it is done by individuals. Instead, the interviewee makes reference to ‘the organised right wing’ (l. 4); this description implies that this group has strongly held negative views towards foreigners, including asylum seekers and refugees. This description is in contrast to those who were described as ‘ignorant’ in extract 12, as the organised group is implied to have views that are difficult to change whereas those who are merely ‘ignorant’ have the potential to change if they have access to accurate information. So far then, the negative views that may develop against asylum seekers and refugees are presented as undeserved, and as a result of a combination of the economic situation and a minority who have strongly held negative views; this construction carefully avoids blaming either asylum seekers and refugees or locals in general for this negativity.

The interviewee goes on to suggest that ‘negative positions’ (l. 18) may result if there was ‘much more direct competition for work’ (l. 14). This again draws on the notion that the economic context plays a causal role in developing antagonism towards asylum seekers and refugees. It also draws on systematic vagueness, particularly in terms of ‘the fulcrums of eh:h sort of development of negative [...] negative positions’

(ll. 16-18). This avoids giving exact details of the links between the economic situation and the implied antagonism, thereby making it harder to challenge, while also avoiding allocating responsibility or agency to specific individuals. This is backed up by reference to 'history' (l. 20) and thereby leads to justifying investment in 'an infrastructure which is preventative' and informs people of the truth (ll. 20-24). In this way, antagonism is presented as stemming from the economic situation and historical forces with the solution lying in investment in society and education. As with the previous extract, suggesting 'tryin' to help people understand what's really going on' (l. 24) implies that real knowledge would result in people not having negative views and therefore antagonism is unjustified and asylum seekers and refugees rightly belong in the host society.

The extract also contains a very careful description of a certain part of the local society. In particular, descriptions such as 'disenfranchised' (l. 28) and 'so alienated from work that they (1.0) u:uh have stopped looking' (ll. 31-32) present these people's situation as the result of external forces rather than being due to their own actions or dispositions. This is a way of justifying further investment in the local community while avoiding allocating blame to those who have found themselves in this situation. This is also emphasised through the use of footing (Goffman, 1981) whereby the interviewee distances himself from a term that has negative connotations that he does not want to endorse: 'some would call it an underclass, not a term I like' (ll. 28-29). In this regard, Wacquant (2008) has argued that the term 'underclass' is a pejorative fiction, masquerading as sociological analysis, which implies that people who fall into this category have an antisocial value system which prevents them from accessing employment or gaining upward social mobility. The interviewee then presents his own view in contrast to this and thereby avoids placing responsibility on these people for their situation. This group is then compared to 'an incoming group of migrants [...] who are incredibly motivated' (ll. 36-38), and this motivation is taken to be potentially responsible for seeing the migrants employed over locals. Whereas this motivation is implied to be legitimate grounds for employment selection, the interviewee suggests this could be 'twisted' into a 'fascist [...] response' (ll. 41-44); the implication is that the



reality could somehow be distorted, possibly by the 'right wing', into antagonism towards asylum seekers and refugees. Using the notion of fascism makes links between such responses and the extremely negative connotations associated with the holocaust, and the unfair and inhumane treatment of derogated out-groups (Every & Augoustinos, 2007).

Overall then this extract is interesting for the ways in which it carefully outlines the potential sources of antagonism towards asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants as lying primarily externally to local people: through the economic situation, the 'right wing', historical forces, and other vaguely implied origins. It also includes carefully describing members of the local community so that they are not blameworthy for their situation. The solutions then are presented as lying at a societal level in terms of investment in the infrastructure as well as ensuring people are adequately informed. This construction then carefully spells out the issues and potential solutions while drawing on systematic vagueness in a way that avoids specific details that may be liable for criticism as well as avoiding making negative evaluations of either local people or asylum seekers and refugees which could imply the speaker was biased.

The following extract provides a more specific account of the potential conflict in relation to employment; in this case the account provides a more negative construction of some members of the local population. The extract follows a section of the interview in which the interviewee stated that some people at his work expressed negative views towards asylum seekers.

*Extract 14: Local 1*

- 1 SK why do you think it is you know some of the people (.) who have said some negative
- 2 things, why do you think that they do have those negative views?
- 3 L1 (0.6) most of the people at my work (0.8) work and we're all chasing work all the
- 4 time and we're all chasing (.) big money
- 5 SK right
- 6 L1 (0.8) and I think they're jealous that somebody else has come across and stole their

7 work  
 8 SK okay  
 9 L1 (0.7) I don't think they actually understand that these people have got problems at  
 10 their home (0.7)  
 11 SK right  
 12 L1 (0.6) I don't think they understand if they send all the British home from these  
 13 countries (.) maybe these people could stay in their country and work heh (.)  
 14 SK ri(h)ght  
 15 L1 (0.6) you get sorta (1.7) I think some people don't think before they open their mouth  
 16 (.) they just think selfishness, me me me and then just slag off the rest of the world (.)  
 17 SK right=  
 18 L1 =who need help

The response from Local 1 constructs local people as working and also highlights the active nature of their attempts to access paid work: 'we're all chasing work all the time' (ll. 3-4). The negativity is then explained with reference to the emotions, specifically being 'jealous' (l. 6), that comes with other people getting work when they are trying to get it. Importantly, gaining work is presented as them having 'stole their work' (ll. 6-7). This combines a possessive sense in which the work rightfully 'belongs' to the locals the interviewee is discussing with the implication that refugees accessing this work is morally wrong. An 'us and them' construction is built into this line of argument: the 'we're' (l. 3) and 'they're' (l. 6) is contrasted with 'somebody else [who] has come across' (l. 6) and draws on implicit references to different national groups in terms of coming across from overseas (Billig, 1995), therefore suggesting that work in the UK naturally belongs to British people and should not be 'taken' by people from other countries.

This construction is not challenged by the interviewee; rather, he suggests that the people who hold negative views of asylum seekers and refugees don't 'understand that these people have got problems at their home' (ll. 9-10). In a way these two discursive constructions hit on two potential portrayals of asylum seekers: as those who come for economic reasons or those who come due to facing persecution in their

countries of origin (see also extract 1). These also relate to the level of culpability in arriving in the UK: if they came for economic reasons then they were responsible for choosing to come, if they came due to reasons of persecution then they are not 'blameworthy'. Inbuilt into this argument is the implication that the jealousy is to some extent warranted or at least understandable and therefore the jobs rightfully belong to British people. The local people are then faulted not for their logic but rather because they are not in possession of the facts. As with extract 12, presenting the negative views as being due to a lack of information reduces the culpability of the locals while also legitimising the presence of asylum seekers and refugees by implying that a fuller understanding of the situation of asylum seekers results in agreeing with their right to be in the UK.

The interviewee reinforces the view that work belongs to nationals through suggesting that asylum seekers and refugees could stay in their own countries if the British people left. Furthermore, this suggests that British people hold some responsibility for asylum seekers being in the UK and therefore should not hold negative views towards them (see also extract 2). Similar to the construction that suggests ignorance is the cause, suggesting that locals 'don't think' (l. 15) implies that a correct view would result in people supporting the presence of asylum seekers, but also puts more culpability on local people, who are responsible for the extent to which they 'think' about the issue. Moreover, this lack of thinking has a moral aspect, as people are presented as being 'selfish' (l. 16) and therefore not thinking of others, in particular those who 'who need help' (l. 18). Therefore this construction works by presenting asylum seekers as being in need of refuge, as locals having some responsibility for thinking of others, as the UK as being responsible for offering protection to refugees and therefore as the negative views of locals being wrong and unjustified. The following extract continues along a similar line but introduces the role of the media.

*Extract 15: Local 2*

- 1 SK the next question was how you think asylum seekers and refugees are per↑ceived↓ by  
2 the local community here
- 3 L2 (2.3) u::h right that (3.2) u::m (3.8) the majority of people ya talk to (0.6) or ya hear  
4 in the bus or whatever (1.8) uh (1.6) they tend to toe the fucking (1.7) the red top  
5 press's line, know? (.) that uh (0.8) they're over here (2.0) because of the benefits, to  
6 get a house (1.2) to get all this money (1.6) NHS ((National Health Service)) (.) uh  
7 (1.0) which isnae the case (1.7) but people believe that uh (0.7) fucking adamantly  
8 (0.8) that that is the case, know? (1.9) doesnae matter aboot (1.0) if you're gettin'  
9 persecuted in your home country or whatever (1.0) threat of death or (0.7) that is (.) a  
10 big (1.6) majority of eh Scots I believe (.) still (.) think that (1.7) that they're just all  
11 here to scrounge off our magnificent (.) country heh you know ((laughing)) (.) who  
12 wouldnae want to come [((laughing))]
- 13 SK [sure]
- 14 L1 (0.8) here to scrounge off it (.) uh (1.0) which is (2.4) which is f::ucking  
15 heartbreaking to tell you the truth

In this extract, as with many of the other interviews, the interviewee connects locals' perceptions of asylum seekers and refugees with the way they are portrayed in the media. Saying that people 'tend to toe the fucking (1.7) the red top press's line' (ll. 4-5) suggests that people are conforming to the views in the tabloid press, while also presenting the source of these views in a way that is hearable as highly negative. Furthermore, suggesting that 'the red top press' has a 'line' implies that it has a particular view on asylum seekers and refugees that it espouses, rather than, for instance, that it undertakes balanced and fact-based reporting on the issue. Together then this construction suggests that people merely follow a standard view on asylum seekers and refugees that is produced by a negatively evaluated press source. This introduction to the interviewee's more detailed answer to the question already begins to criticise this view as somehow inaccurate or unsatisfactory.

The interviewee goes on to outline the line of the ‘red top press’; similar to the ‘standard story’ referred to in extract 1, it suggests that asylum seekers are in the UK to access a variety of resources, particularly those related to benefits, housing and healthcare. As with extract 14, this view is contrasted with the persecution and ‘threat of death’ (l. 9) that people faced in their own countries. In this sense then the views of locals are presented as focusing on the material issues and assuming a motivation among asylum seekers that neglects the issues of persecution so as to delegitimise their right and need to be in the UK.

This construction also relies on an ironic construction of the host society. By laughing when referring to the UK and using hyperbole – ‘our magnificent (.) country’ (l. 11) – the positive place identity (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000) can be heard as being used in an ironic sense. The result is that the ‘magnificent’ view of the UK is associated with those who have a false perspective which is implicitly criticised. Similarly, whereas the term ‘scrounge’ might be used to criticise those who are seen to come to the UK for access to benefits, here the negative connotations of the term work to undermine the argument that ‘who wouldnae want to come’ to ‘scrounge’ off the UK (ll. 12-14); that is, as ‘scrounge’ has negative connotations such that people would not want to be ‘scroungers’, so the idea that people are eager to ‘scrounge’ is made to seem ridiculous. Thus the argument of the Red Top press, and those who subscribe to it, is made to seem false both because it has a false view of the ‘magnificence’ of the UK and because it relies on an unrealistic view of the desirability of ‘scrounging’ for benefits. Ending by describing the situation as ‘f::ucking heartbreaking’ (ll. 14-15) positions the interviewee as sympathetic to asylum seekers and refugees and concerned about the false and negative views of others, ultimately suggesting that it is a sad state of affairs that should be changed.

The final extract in this section is from a refugee and illustrates how the similar types of constructions and arguments that were evident among the interviews with locals and professionals were also present in the interviews with refugees. This extract comes during the interviewee’s discussion of the public’s misunderstanding of, and negative views towards, refugees and asylum seekers.

*Extract 16: Refugee 4*

- 1 R4 you know I don't quite blame the people really it's  
2 SK mm-hmm  
3 R4 I think the media (0.8) some of the media people they just horrible and the way they  
4 write (0.8) stories about asylum seekers and refugees is=  
5 SK =right=  
6 R4 =just (1.2) it's not in a good light at all you know make people feel (1.5) probably  
7 angry or so jealous, probably think oh asylum seekers are getting everything  
8 SK right=  
9 R4 =you know this like that that (1.0) make people angry they're like well I'm here I  
10 can't even get a house (0.8) why is this guy coming from nowhere and just all of a  
11 sudden has got a house you know=  
12 SK =mmm  
13 R4 (.) it- and you can understand this  
14 SK mmm  
15 R4 (.) w:w- uh h- (.) how (.) maybe I would've felt the same thing if I was in my country  
16 and (.) but it's all about understanding first, you know you need to be (.) I think the  
17 people need to be educated  
18 SK mm-hmm  
19 R4 (1.5) on the realities of (0.8) people like us coming here  
20 SK mmm  
21 R4 (0.8) I'm not gonna say all asylum seekers are genuine (.) it's not for me to say  
22 SK sure  
23 R4 but (1.0) there are real people with real trouble coming here  
24 SK yeah  
25 R4 and I think the (1.2) the media and the government or whatever should do more in  
26 telling people the facts, the truth  
27 SK yeah  
28 R4 (0.6) and not (.) make asylum seekers as (1.8) bad people or=  
29 SK =right

- 30 R4 you know people like ourselves (1.4) I blame the media more  
31 SK okay  
32 R4 not educating or the government not educating you know people

In this extract the interviewee specifically addresses the issue of ‘blame’ (l. 1) in terms of the responsibility for the public’s negative views towards refugees and asylum seekers. As with previous extracts that referred to ignorance (e.g., extract 12), here the interviewee suggests that the public are not totally culpable for their views. Specifically, and in line with the previous extract, he suggests that the ‘media’ (l. 3) play a role in creating this negativity. In particular, suggesting that the media writes stories that are ‘horrible’ (l. 3) and ‘not in a good light’ (l. 6) suggests that the media are in some way distorting the truth. The implication is that the public are responding to an untrue representation of asylum seekers and refugees; the public are therefore presented as not culpable due to having been misled.

The use of reported speech both portrays these views as real and allows the speaker to evaluate their validity (Buttny, 2003): ‘they’re like well I’m here I can’t even get a house (0.8) why is this guy coming from nowhere and just all of a sudden has got a house’ (ll. 9-11). The use of the rhetorical question both suggests that there is no good answer to the question – i.e., it is obviously unfair that a house is being allocated to someone who has just come into the country – and that the speaker does not know why asylum seekers are coming in the UK. In particular it is the use of ‘nowhere’ and ‘just all of a sudden’ (ll. 10-11) that suggest a lack of knowledge and rational explanation for the state of affairs; there is a lack of any content regarding the circumstances from which asylum seekers are fleeing and the moral or legal justifications for providing support. This lack of knowledge turns the seemingly rhetorical question into a question that has an answer, and indeed the solution that the interviewee puts forth – ‘people need to be educated’ (l. 17) – implies that the question can and should be answered through education about the ‘realities’ (l. 19) which would allay these negative feelings. The construction of empathy – ‘maybe I would’ve felt the same thing if I was in my country’ (l. 15) – creates a commonality between the interviewee and locals, suggesting that the

locals' views are understandable, in a way that portrays locals in a positive light while also portraying the speaker as fair-minded.

However the upshot is given in such a way that it trumps these negative attitudes: 'but it's all about understanding first' (l. 16). This suggests that in the end people need to understand each other, which involves education, so that negative views based on distortions of the truth are ultimately indefensible. In line 21, stating 'I'm not gonna say all asylum seekers are genuine (.) it's not for me to say' is interesting because it deals with the counter argument that at least some asylum seekers are not 'genuine'; in this case, rather than having to deal with truth of the statement – which might be difficult – shifting the appropriateness of making such a statement off the speaker is useful as it suggests that it is not an argument the speaker needs to get into. Rather than making an absolute argument about the genuineness of asylum seekers (e.g., 'all asylum seekers are genuine') which may be easy to dispute, the statement 'but (1.0) there are real people with real trouble coming here' (l. 23) focuses on the reality of the problems that people face without dealing with the number of people, and implicitly contrasts this with the false impression given by the media. The extract is ended with a clear allocation of responsibility on the media / the government – 'I blame the media more [...] not educating or the government not educating you know people' (ll. 30-32) – that is explicit about the cause of negative views among the local population and builds upon the way in which the reality of asylum seekers and the role of media are constructed.

Overall the extract portrays asylum seekers as not coming to the UK for economic reasons, yet some local people believe this to be the case (or for them to be receiving benefits unfairly), that the responsibility resides with the media and the solution is education. This builds commonality between asylum seekers and locals and provides a level of empathy for the views of locals, although ultimately they are constructed as being misguided. Placing the source of the problem as being external to both asylum seekers and local people links the two groups together (i.e., they have both been negatively affected by the media) in a way that usefully highlights their common situation (Kirkwood et al., 2005). This analysis illustrates how some of the aspects of the discourse produced by the locals and professionals are also evident in the interview



responses from the refugees and asylum seekers, and that these function to condemn the negative views while carefully managing criticisms of the local people themselves.

Overall the analysis of these extracts in this section illustrates how negative views towards asylum seekers are presented in terms of rational concerns over the allocation of scarce resources or access to employment. These constructions draw on notions that resources and jobs rightfully ‘belong’ to members of the local community or the nation, therefore implying that resistance to allowing asylum seekers and refugees access is justified. However, these views can then be challenged by constructing asylum seekers and refugees as ‘part of the community’, which legitimises their access to resources, or highlighting the persecution they have had to flee, which implies they are not at blame for coming to the UK and therefore should not be viewed negatively for accessing employment. Negative views were also portrayed as belonging to an ‘ignorant minority’, which discredits them to some extent for not having the mandate of the majority, and attributing their antagonism to ignorance works to reduce their culpability while implying that their views are not justified by the truth and suggesting that there is scope for improvement. Similarly, the use of systematic vagueness (Edwards & Potter, 1992) and suggesting that antagonism was related to issues at the societal level – such as history and the economy – allowed criticism of negative views while avoiding making general negative and essentialist claims about the local population, and in particular suggested solutions at the societal level. Moreover, the analysis illustrated how the media and a conforming majority can be blamed for the negative views towards asylum seekers and refugees, and that these may be criticised through contrasting them with the ‘reality’ of the persecution they have fled. The next section continues to address the response of the local population by moving on to focus on asylum seekers’ and refugees’ constructions of the issue, with a particular focus on racism and violence.

## **Racism and violence**

This section focuses on how the asylum seekers and refugees who were interviewed talked about antagonism from the local community, racism and violence. It should be

emphasised here that these extracts should not be taken as representative, and in particular it should not be assumed that asylum seekers and refugees in Glasgow generally experience overt racism or violence; although research suggests that many refugees and asylum seekers in Glasgow have experienced discrimination or harassment (Bowes et al., 2009; Mulvey, 2011). As discussed in the literature review, extant discursive social psychological research on racism has largely ignored the views of ethnic minority groups, and in particular direct victims of racism and racially motivated violence. As argued by Verkuyten (2005a), it is important to analyse discourse by ethnic minority group members in order to investigate similarities as well as differences in the ways they talk about racism. More specifically, Verkuyten (2005b) has pointed out that very little research has been done in social psychology with asylum seekers, largely due to difficulties of access. It may be that the shift in recent years within discursive psychology from interview data to naturalistic data (e.g., Potter & Hepburn, 2005) has been particularly limiting in this regard, as it is difficult to access asylum seekers' naturally occurring discourse.

Some research suggests that minority group members, including refugees, may deny or play down the existence of discrimination, and this may function to justify their presence in the society, emphasise the role of individual responsibility and highlight the scope for social mobility (Colic-Peisker, 2005; Verkuyten, 2005a). Furthermore, other discursive research has shown that making accusations of racism is a very sensitive act that may reflect negatively on the accuser (e.g., Chiang, 2010; Every & Augoustinos, 2007; Goodman, 2010; Goodman & Burke, 2010; Riggs & Due, 2010). This section therefore explores this issue through focusing on the ways in which asylum seekers and refugees discuss antagonism, racism and violence they have experienced in the host society. The first extract in this section deals with the public's response to asylum seekers and refugees; it builds upon some of the points made regarding extract 16 while also specifically addressing the issue of racism.

*Extract 17: Refugee 10*

- 1 SK how do you think um asylum seekers and refugees are perceived by the local  
2 community?  
3 R10 (5.5) mm-mmm heh heh (0.6) that's quite a tough one [heh]  
4 SK [okay] nah just whatever  
5 R10 heh=  
6 SK =heh  
7 R10 yeah no (2.0) I mean it's (1.0) it also depends just on the mentality of the people  
8 SK [okay]  
9 R10 [yeah]  
10 SK yep  
11 R10 (0.8) there's some people who are (0.8) no trouble at all, there will be no problems  
12 SK yeah  
13 R10 (.) with (.) asylum seekers  
14 SK yeah  
15 R10 (.) mm (1.0) you will tell them oh I'm an asylum seeker (0.8) they're happy that  
16 you're here heh=  
17 SK =sure yeah  
18 R10 yeah (.) but there's other people again (2.2) they're not happy (.) eh (1.5) it's em (1.0)  
19 like those who are happy (.) who are not happy (.) about it, they just s- see you (1.0)  
20 as a person (.) who has probably come over to take something out of the country  
21 SK yeah  
22 R10 but every day you don't take anything you know heh=  
23 SK =right yeah=  
24 R10 =mm but that's the way they they see you  
25 SK mmm  
26 R10 as maybe someone's (come to go a?) job or get the benefits or things like that you  
27 know=  
28 SK =yeah  
29 R10 mm (1.0) and that's (.) the negative (1.0) thing that most of the some- some or a few  
30 (.) people in society have towards [the]

31 SK [yeah]  
 32 R10 asylum seekers (1.2) mm (1.0) I know most of it's it's not- it's got nothing to do with  
 33 your (0.8) colour or y-  
 34 SK °oh okay°  
 35 R10 mm  
 36 SK °right°  
 37 R10 it's just a minority those who just think that (1.6) you just coming in to get a job or  
 38 things like that heh

The hesitation in answering the question and describing it as 'quite a tough one' (l. 3) presents the question as being problematic; in particular, the idea that there is a homogeneous perspective that can be applied to the local community, or even that there is a clear sense of what constitutes 'the local community' (ll. 1-2) is resisted. The idea of a unitary perspective on asylum seekers by the 'local community' is more explicitly challenged through the interviewee stating that it 'depends just on the mentality of the people' (l. 7), suggesting individual variation within the community while locating the cause of that perception as resting on a psychological aspect: their 'mentality'. The local community is then divided into two groups of people: those who are 'happy that you're here' (ll. 15-16) and those who are 'not happy' (l. 18). The perspective of those who are 'not happy' is described in further detail in lines 19-20: 'they just see you (1.0) as a person (.) who has probably come over to take something out of the country'. The use of 'just' implies that this perspective is limited; it does not take account of the full picture. The unhappiness is then associated with a view that asylum seekers are taking things from the country; when this is challenged ('but' l. 22), rather than it being suggested that it is not right to think this, it is suggested that it is wrong because the asylum seekers 'don't take anything' (l. 22). This implies that there is some legitimacy in being unhappy about people taking things out of the country; rather, the problem is that in this case it is not true.

This is continued further in lines 26-27, as it is suggested that people see asylum seekers as taking jobs or benefits. The interviewee then orients to the suggestion that the

negative views of some locals may be due to racism, as he says that ‘I know most of it’s it’s not- it’s got nothing to do with your (0.8) colour’ (ll. 32-33). In line with several of the previous extracts, this argument places the responsibility or cause of the negative views as lying with a perception of the unfair access to resources to asylum seekers. Placing responsibility on a false perception suggests that the negativity is not due to inherent racism and is amenable to change (i.e., through being aware of the ‘truth’ that asylum seekers are not in the UK to ‘take’ things). Moreover, stating that it is ‘just a minority’ (l. 37) who hold the negative attitudes avoids making a negative evaluation of the local community in general.

This analysis is in line with previous discourse research that has suggested making claims about racism is delicate and can have negative consequences for the speaker (Augoustinos & Every, 2010; Goodman & Burke, 2010) and that members of ethnic minority groups may argue against the presence of racism in ways that portray positive social change as possible (Verkuyten, 2005a). In this case, asylum seekers may have to manage the dilemma of referring to experiences or attitudes that could be understood as racist, yet making negative assessments of the whole local community could itself be seen as prejudice or being over sensitive. It would also suggest that the problem of integration of asylum seekers is difficult to address, or even that asylum seekers cannot have a place in the local community, due to inherent racism (Colic-Peisker, 2005). The arguments and constructions put forth by the interviewee therefore manage this dilemma by associating the problem with distorted perceptions among a minority of the local community, explicitly denying the existence of racism.

However this account only addresses general ‘negative views’ amongst the local population; the subsequent extracts deal with instances in which the interviewees or their family members have actually been attacked or assaulted in some way by members of the host society. The next extract therefore deals with a refugee’s account of having things thrown at him; this extract is from a section of the interview in which the interviewee was providing an account of his experiences in Glasgow and includes a comparison of two different parts of Glasgow in which he lived.

*Extract 18: Refugee 4*

- 1 R4 I had no troubles in [a different part of Glasgow] you know but when I came here  
2 (3.0) you know (.) I get- I started getting people calling me names and stuff um=  
3 SK =okay  
4 R4 (1.2) throwing stuff at me, sometimes you know when I when I would be walking  
5 down this road (1.6) some bored people are up there (.)  
6 SK yeah=  
7 R4 =you know when you'd walk past they're throw things at [you]  
8 SK [right]  
9 R4 and stuff like that (0.6) I'm thinking that's just (.) that's probably about (.) my  
10 colour or something like that, you have to think like this because there's no other  
11 reason (.) but some people are just bored they would probably=  
12 SK =heh=  
13 R4 =do it to anybody you know

This extract begins with the interviewee distinguishing between his relatively positive experiences in one part of Glasgow with his negative experiences in another part: 'I had no troubles in [a different part of Glasgow] you know but when I came here...' (l. 1). Limiting these negative experiences both temporally and geographically works to give reality to the abuse that he has received while avoiding the identity of someone who might be overly sensitive to such behaviour; that is, it is not simply that he 'feels' abused wherever he is, but rather the abuse is specific to this area. In line with previous research that highlights the sensitivity of making accusations of racism (Augoustinos & Every, 2010), making the claims area-specific avoids making a generalised statement about Scottish, British or Glaswegian people, something which could make the speaker seem overly sensitive (van Dijk, 1992).

It is worth noting the ways in which the incidents are described. That is, the descriptions consist of vague and generalised terms such as: 'people calling me names and stuff' (l. 2), 'throwing stuff at me' (l. 4), 'and stuff like that' (l. 9). Furthermore, the perpetrators are described as 'some bored people' (l. 5); this presents them in

nonspecific terms as well as suggesting that their motivations are mundane. This is in contrast to research by Edwards (2005), which suggested people tend to use detailed description and emphasise the culpability of others when working up an account in the form of a complaint. In this sense, the use of vague description and the de-emphasising of the perpetrators' culpability functions to downplay the seriousness of the events and avoids constituting the account as a complaint or the interviewee as a 'complainer'.

This extract is particularly interesting in terms of the explanations for the abuse. More specifically, the extract contains two competing explanations for the behaviour: the interviewee's 'colour or something like that' (l. 10) or the people being 'just bored' (l. 11). The 'colour' explanation suggests that the behaviour was racially motivated and was due to attributes related to the interviewee; alternatively, the 'bored' explanation suggests an attribute associated with the people who threw 'stuff', the behaviour is portrayed as not racially motivated and the interviewee being targeted had nothing to do with his appearance or group membership.

There are several aspects of the 'colour' explanation that mark it out as being produced in a sensitive manner: stating 'I'm thinking' (l. 9) presents it as requiring consideration; 'that's probably about' (l. 9) portrays it as tentative; and saying 'or something like that' (l. 10) reduces the specificity of the explanation. Moreover, the interview goes on to say: 'you have to think like this because there's no other reason' (ll. 10-11). This suggests both that the motivation of racism is the *last* explanation that someone would come to and also that it is an explanation that you are *forced* to take; the reality of this explanation is therefore built through eliminating other explanations and suggesting that it is one a person comes to only reluctantly, rather than, say, because they are generally inclined to see racism in a variety of behaviour. This is in line with previous discursive research that has highlighted the sensitivity and potentially problematic nature of making accusations of racism (e.g., Chiang, 2010; Every & Augoustinos, 2007; Goodman, 2010; Goodman & Burke, 2010; Riggs & Due, 2010).

Interestingly, however, once this explanation is given as the only conceivable motivation, the interviewee produces the possibility that it may instead be related to boredom, and therefore is not racially motivated or specifically directed at him: 'but

some people are just bored they would probably [...] do it to anybody' (ll. 11-13). This highlights the difficulty of making accusations of racially motivated behaviour: the explanation is given only tentatively, only as a last possible explanation, and then it is withdrawn. However, the tentative production and negation of the racism explanation is one way of making the racism explanation available without undermining the speaker's ability to make the claim through seeming too eager to apply it. In a sense, this allows the speaker to put the issue of racism 'in play' while avoiding the potentially problematic consequences of committing to an accusation of racist intent.

The analysis of the following extract extends the investigation of this issue through addressing an account of violence that incorporates comments on the interviewee's nationality, a case in which the issue of 'race' is made relevant and therefore potentially more difficult to deny. The extract is in response to a question about the contact that the interviewee has had with local people in Glasgow.

*Extract 19: Refugee 13*

- 1     R13    it is common in the world that maybe in [R13's country of origin] somebody (0.8)
- 2            uh doesn't like (.) anybody from another country
- 3     SK     right=
- 4     R13    =that's true because they didn't know (.) why (.) we are here
- 5     SK     mmm
- 6     R13    (.) sometimes they told me (.) black (.) come back in your country (1.0) uh and my
- 7            and my son has a problem (0.8) in the street front my eyes
- 8     SK     yeah
- 9     R13    um that um (.) the the mmm Scottish uh student (.) um (1.8) uh kick my son with
- 10           glass (1.0) and (0.8) I told (0.8) why? (0.7) with (.) the Scottish people, why? (0.6)
- 11           and he told (0.8) mmm oh (0.6) you c- and you must (.) come back in your
- 12           country, why you is (.) come here? (1.0) and uh (.) I told uh (.) I saw this problem
- 13           (.) uh (.) in the the school his school and (.) um the police in his school (.) and uh
- 14           (0.6) his head teacher (0.8) told (.) this uh (1.3) uh student (0.8) is very bad (1.0)
- 15           and his wr- his behaviour is very bad (0.6) and uh I told (0.8) no he is good (1.0)



16 he didn't know (0.9) uh (1.3) about everything (1.0) my head t- his his teacher told  
 17 no (1.0) he is no only about racist (0.8) only but he is very bad in the school and  
 18 he must go out (0.8) for one week (1.0) when he go out for one week (1.0) my son  
 19 was crying (0.8) it was ((number)) (0.8) uh ((number)) years ago (1.0) and he was  
 20 crying and he told no my mum (0.6) uh I (.) my heart (0.9) hasn't (.) my heart uh  
 21 (.) tell me he must come back in the school (0.6) because my son is very (.) uh  
 22 sensitive (0.9) and uh we try (0.8) and we told why? (.) his head teacher told no  
 23 about you (0.8) he must stay in the house (.) about three (.) or uh four complained  
 24 that (.) they had problem (1.0) okay after that when he comes back in the school  
 25 (0.8) my son made for him (0.7) a good relationship  
 26 SK °yeah°  
 27 R13 (0.8) and uh now (0.8) they are very good friend

This narrative is prefaced with a general statement about the ubiquity of prejudice: it is constructed as being 'common in the world' (l. 1), including the interviewee's country of origin. This serves to highlight the relevance of racism to the narrative which follows. Furthermore, by presenting this form of prejudice as common across different countries, it implies that the events the interviewee is about to describe are not necessarily specific to Scottish society. It therefore functions to avoid appearing to make a negative claim about Scottish society – which is particularly sensitive for someone who is reliant on the society for refuge, and generally runs the risk of undermining the speaker by suggesting they are prejudiced themselves – and to some extent reduces the culpability for racist behaviour as it is so common. Framing the account in this way therefore appears to serve two contradictory roles: it makes racism relevant while also minimising the culpability for racism.

As with some other extracts presented above (e.g., extracts 12, 14 and 16), these negative views are linked to ignorance – 'they didn't know (.) why (.) we are here' (l. 4). This serves to reduce the blameworthiness of the people who are against asylum seekers. Furthermore, it implies that the asylum seekers have legitimate reasons for being in the host society and that if the local people knew these reasons then they would not be antagonistic.

The account of the violent incident is framed by, and includes references to, direct speech that invokes notions of skin colour and nationality and is hearably racist: ‘sometimes they told me (.) black (.) come back in your country’ (l. 6) and ‘you must (.) come back in your country, why you is (.) come here?’ (ll. 11-12). This implies potentially racist motivations on the part of the student who attacked her son. Furthermore, it draws on notions that people ‘belong’ to particular countries and that being outside of ‘your’ country is a legitimate matter for question; in this regard it reinforces the interviewee’s previous comment that ‘they didn’t know (.) why (.) we are here’ (l. 4) and therefore implies some level of ignorance on the part of the student. The actual violent act – ‘the mmm Scottish uh student (.) um (1.8) uh kick my son with glass’ (ll. 9-10) – is not in itself described as racist, but rather the racial motivations are worked in both through framing the narrative in terms of people disliking others of different nationalities and by the reported speech that is hearable as racist talk. In this way the narrative is presented as true – it happened in front of her eyes (l. 7) – yet is constituted solely of observable details. This allows the racial aspects to be understood by the hearer without the speaker having to deal with the problems of making an overt accusation of racist intent.

The racist aspects are further worked into the narrative by linking the evaluation of racial motivation to the head teacher who says the student is ‘racist’ (l. 17). This relies on a form of footing (Goffman, 1981) that allows the interviewee to distance herself from this conclusion to some extent. The claim of racist motivation can be heard as having some legitimacy, given it is produced by a person in authority, yet the interviewee is able to avoid an endorsement of this evaluation, thereby avoiding the problems that are associated with making accusations of racism. More specifically, the interviewee contradicts the head teacher’s portrayal of the student as ‘very bad’ (l. 14) and instead says ‘no he is good (1.0) he didn’t know (0.9) uh (1.3) about everything’ (ll. 15-16). As with other extracts that portray the causes of negative behaviour towards asylum seekers as stemming from ignorance, here the interviewee suggests that the student is essentially good, and bad behaviour related to a lack of knowledge should not be taken as an overall negative judgement of someone.

The interviewee goes on to work up a sense of empathy towards the student. For instance, this is achieved through describing her son crying and feeling in his ‘heart’ that the boy should be able to return to school (ll. 19-21). The genuineness of this claim is supported by stating that they later became ‘very good friend[s]’ (l. 27). This presents the interviewee and her family in a good light – specifically as compassionate – which works to remove any suggestion that they are prejudiced against Scottish people and further that they support positive social change in instances of racism. In line with research by Verkuyten (2005a) and Colic-Peisker (2005), this type of construction legitimises the presence of asylum seekers and refugees by illustrating how positive social change is possible, without which their ability to live in the host society would be compromised. As with the previous extract, this account also serves to put the topic of racism ‘in play’ while avoiding some of the problematic aspects of making direct accusations of racist motivations.

The previous two extracts have illustrated how interviewees may produce accounts of insults and violence against them in such a way that they avoid aligning themselves with direct accusations of racism. However, the question remains whether this type of account may be produced in cases of more severe violence. The next extract therefore deals with an instance in which the interviewee was severely attacked to the point of being hospitalised and losing several of his teeth. The extract comes during a section of the interview in which he was describing his reasons for moving to Glasgow from a city in England.

*Extract 20: Refugee 9*

- 1     R9     a lot of things happened when I since I came here
- 2     SK     okay
- 3     R9     (.) yeah for instance you know I was attacked twice (.)
- 4     SK     ↓oh really
- 5     R9     (.) I came here (.) in (.) Glasgow having all my teeth
- 6     SK     really

7 R9 (.) and as you see now all this part ((points to missing teeth)) (.) is fully gone  
8 SK yeah  
9 R9 (.) and (.) now I was attacked twice  
10 SK geez=  
11 R9 =in the city  
12 SK god  
13 R9 (.) and I did nothing to nobody (.)  
14 SK geez=  
15 R9 =and even I don't know (.) them those people who are (.) did did this to me (.)  
16 SK god  
17 R9 and they just came me I'm (0.7) I mean four three guys (.)  
18 SK geez=  
19 R9 =giving me punches y- you know b- you know (0.8) and that was you know I  
20 mean (0.5) I said I mean (0.8) these guys you know they're animals (0.8) even the  
21 eh- I even I (.) even (0.9) they were not even an- m- animals but they're more than  
22 animals because (0.6) the animals (.) animal unless you do something to them (.)  
23 they won't come for you  
24 SK mmm  
25 R9 so (.) I was wondering what they are savage (.)  
26 SK mmm  
27 R9 and I think, what the hell is this? I mean we are in two thousand- two thousand  
28 and ten  
29 SK yeah  
30 R9 (.) so I mean the worl- the world had (0.8) is grown and and getting bigger  
31 SK yeah  
32 R9 so (.) and nobody (.) nobody do this anymore I mean (.) in this in the world (.) in  
33 the real world  
34 SK °right yeah°  
35 R9 yeah certainly so and I say (0.8) I did nothing to nobody [as far] as I know  
36 SK [mmm]  
37 SK ° yeah°  
38 R9 (.) you know and I will say maybe (0.9) this thing is is my skin (1.5) yeah and I

This extract begins with a ‘before and after’ narrative relating to coming to Glasgow and the interviewee losing his teeth (ll. 5-7). The narrative structure positions ‘Glasgow’ (l. 5) as the source of the violence while the direct reference to the missing teeth presents the irrefutable consequences of the attack (l. 7). The interviewee’s innocence then is constructed through eliminating other explanations – ‘I did nothing to nobody’ (l. 13), ‘I don’t know (.) them’ (l. 15) – so that the attack cannot be seen as provoked or related to something personal about the speaker. Furthermore, this can be heard as searching for an explanation of the attack, a topic that comes to dominate the remainder of the extract.

Given these initial references to the implied motivations of the attackers, the subsequent descriptions not only characterise the attackers but also imply particular explanations for their behaviour. In this way, the initial description of the attackers as ‘animals’ (l. 20) serves both to criticise their behaviour – they acted as animals rather than as people – and to suggest that this behaviour could be understood as some form of base instinct rather than logical rationale. Interestingly, the interviewee goes on to both negate and upgrade this description by saying ‘they were not even an- m- animals but they’re more than animals’ (ll. 21-22); the implication is that animals’ violent behaviour can be understood and excused as part of their nature and a form of self defence. In contrast, the attackers’ behaviour could not even be understood on the level of ‘animals’ as they used violence in a way that was unjustified even by reference to ‘natural’ instincts related to being provoked or threatened: ‘animal unless you do something to them (.) they won’t come for you’ (ll. 22-23). This description emphasises the culpability of the attackers and presents their actions as deplorable, while also making their behaviour appear inexplicable.

The search for an appropriate explanation for the attack is implied through the interviewee’s reference to thought processes regarding the behaviour, as he says ‘I was wondering’ (l. 25). He then produces an alternative characterisation of the attackers as ‘savage’ (l. 25). Once again, this can be heard as criticising the behaviour and as implying that it does not belong in the civilised world we inhabit. However, this

explanation is similarly negated, as he says ‘and I think, what the hell is this?’ (l. 27), suggesting the description is inadequate. In particular, his reference to the present year – ‘we are in [...] two thousand and ten’ (ll. 27-28) – and to the maturing nature of the world – ‘the world had (0.8) is grown and and getting bigger’ (l. 30) – serve to suggest the description of the attackers as ‘savage’ (l. 25) is incompatible with the present, as ‘savages’ belong to a time of the distant past. This is further emphasised by saying ‘nobody do this anymore I mean (.) in this in the world (.) in the real world’ (ll. 32-33). In this case the description is presented as insufficient and as therefore not providing a suitable explanation for the behaviour.

The interviewee then repeats the aspect of his account that denies his own responsibility for the attack – ‘I did nothing to nobody as far as I know’ (l. 35) – before going on to provide his final explanation for the behaviour of the attackers relating to some form of racist motivations: ‘this thing is is my skin’ (l. 38). As with extract 18, the racial explanation is produced as both tentative and reluctant: ‘maybe’ (l. 38) and ‘I hate to say that’ (ll. 38-39). Placing this towards the end of the narrative and after eliminating other explanations presents the speaker as considered and therefore the racial motivation as being a potential aspect of reality rather than a merely subjective interpretation from someone who is overly sensitive. This account therefore illustrates the sensitive way in which people may produce accusations of racism, even when they are victims of severe violence. In particular, the account was worked up through producing and negating a series of possible explanations and presenting the racist motivations as the only feasible conclusion, even if offered up in a highly tentative form.

Overall this section has added to and reinforced previous discursive research that has highlighted the sensitivity of making accusations of racism (e.g., Chiang, 2010; Every & Augoustinos, 2007; Goodman, 2010; Goodman & Burke, 2010; Riggs & Due, 2010). In line with Verkuyten (2005a) and Colic-Peisker (2005), some of the accounts downplayed or denied the existence of racism through invoking ignorance as an explanation, producing the accounts in vague terms and suggesting other more general motivations for antagonistic behaviour. These types of accounts may emphasise the potential for positive social change and imply that asylum seekers and refugees have a

place in the host society that would be problematised by acknowledging wide-spread and ingrained racism, while also putting the issue of racism ‘in play’. Furthermore, when interviewees did suggest that behaviour had racist explanations, they produced these accounts as being reluctant and hesitant, and offered them after eliminating other potential motivations. Making accusations of racism may be particularly difficult for refugees and asylum seekers, who are reliant on the host society for protection, and risk seeming ungrateful if they appear critical. Together these analyses highlight the problems inherent in making such accusations and suggest how even the accounts of victims of seemingly racist violence may actually make racism more difficult to identify and challenge. The next section moves on from the specific topic of racism to address wider issues relating to the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees in the host society, focusing on the notion of ‘integration’.

## **Integration**

As discussed in the literature review, the concept of ‘integration’ plays an important role in policy and practice regarding the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK, yet the term has been used in a variety of ways. For instance, Strang and Ager (2010) have suggested that integration is both a *goal*, in that people can seek to become successfully integrated in society, and a *process*, in that it may be experienced in different ways at different times in relation to different aspects of someone’s life. Alternatively, Berry (1997) defined integration as one possible *strategy* for people coming into contact with a different culture, and characterised it as engaging with the majority culture whilst also maintaining aspects of one’s own culture. Furthermore, Castles et al. (2002) suggested that lay people tend to see integration as being one-way, in the sense that it is something that members of the minority group do, whereas professionals tend to conceive of it as two-way, in the sense that it is a process involving mutual accommodation on the side of the host society as well as minority group members. Moreover, Ager and Strang’s (2004a) concept of integration is not exclusive to asylum seekers and refugees, and can be applied to general members of the host

community, as they suggest that integration is a general good that should be strived for amongst all members of society.

Especially given the various ways in which the concept ‘integration’ has been used, it seems appropriate to take a discursive approach to this topic in order to explore how these various constructions function. In this regard, Dixon and Durrheim (2000; Durrheim & Dixon, 2004, 2005) argued that research on intercultural contact needs to pay more attention to the functions of rhetoric. They suggested that it is important to investigate the ways in which people discursively construct intercultural contact as this has implications for how such contact is experienced and understood, and that constructions constitute actions, in the sense that they can be used for the purpose of social functions, such as blaming, justifying and excluding. Bowskill et al. (2007) used this approach to analyse the ways in which the notion of ‘integration’ functioned in newspaper discussions related to faith schools. Their analysis illustrated that integration is often portrayed as an assumed good, yet it can be constructed in a variety of ways that imply a variety of related actions and responsibilities. Due to the centrality of the concept of integration to the settlement of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK, this section focuses on how the interviewees constructed this notion in their responses, with a particular emphasis on the types of social relations these support and the responsibilities they imply.

The extracts in this section were chosen after a close reading of extracts that used the word ‘integration’ and were selected so as to identify variation in the way this term is used. This section focuses on responses from professionals and locals, as these interviewees tended to use the term ‘integration’, whereas the refugees and asylum seekers usually did not. The first extract in this section is from an interview with a Scottish local and relates to integration and the issue of housing. The extract is from a part of the interview in which the interviewee was discussing the problems with housing asylum seekers in high-rise flats.



*Extract 21: Local 8*

- 1 L8 it's just not right (.) it's not- they wouldn't consider puttin' (2.5) a child out of care  
2 into there  
3 SK right  
4 L8 so why put someone else that's needin' care in there (.) [that's just]  
5 SK [mm-hmm]  
6 L8 my views on it again  
7 SK yeah  
8 L8 you know it's just=  
9 SK =mm-hmm  
10 L8 I just think it's wrong (.)  
11 SK right=  
12 L8 =and if they are gonna put them in there (.) then get back the concierge (0.6)  
13 SK right  
14 L8 (0.8) bring back some security- that feels secure and safe (.)  
15 SK right  
16 L8 I don't think they (.) flats are (.) very safe  
17 SK okay (.) right  
18 L8 they are not↓ (.) and every young (1.1) person that's got a (.) jail wish (.) shall we say  
19 (.) is up they flats (.)  
20 SK °okay°  
21 L8 so it's (.) not fun (.) drugs and (.) drink and (.) all sorts go up there and it's a shame  
22 SK yeah  
23 L8 that's the only thing, and that that that feels wrong (.) there is not plenty of houses but  
24 there is houses that they could've (1.2) helped with the integration (0.6) by putting  
25 (0.6) maybe two families (.) in the one street (.) two families in another street (.)  
26 rather than this (.) lump all families together and put them all up the high risers  
27 SK right  
28 L8 and I think that's what caused a lot of disquiet to start with  
29 SK right  
30 L8 it was like en masse

This extract can be understood in terms of place-identity (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005), as it draws on particular constructions of place as well as the use of identity categories and descriptions that are relatively prescriptive in terms of who belongs where. In particular, the high-rise flats are constructed as incompatible with asylum seekers and this is linked to the concept of integration. For instance, the interviewee draws equivalency between children who have been in care homes and asylum seekers: ‘they wouldn’t consider puttin’ (2.5) a child out of care into there [...] so why put someone else that’s needin’ care in there’ (ll. 1-4). In this way, the identity of asylum seekers and the place where they are housed are mutually constituted so as to criticise the housing policy. More specifically, asylum seekers are constructed as being vulnerable and ‘needin’ care’ (l. 4) whereas the housing is constructed as being a place that is unsuitable for such people. This construction is given a form of moral weight through the interviewee’s evaluation of the situation, as she says: ‘it’s just not right’ (l. 1) and ‘I just think it’s wrong’ (l. 10).

This argument is reinforced through the interviewee’s construction of the flats as being unsafe (l. 16). In particular, the flats are associated with illegal behaviour and drug and alcohol misuse: ‘and every young (1.1) person that’s got a (.) jail wish (.) shall we say (.) is up they flats [...] drugs and (.) drink and (.) all sorts go up there’ (ll. 18-21). Although previous discursive research has highlighted how asylum seekers are often associated with criminality (e.g., Leudar et al., 2008; Malloch & Stanley, 2005), it is interesting to note that here it is the host community, or specifically the housing, that is associated with criminality, so that in fact the asylum seekers, through the contrast, are presented as *not* criminal. Whereas portraying asylum seekers as potentially criminal may function to argue against their presence in the host country, here it is their supposed *lack* of criminality that functions to argue against their presence in the specific form of local housing.

In terms of place, the tall flats are then contrasted with ‘houses’ (ll. 23-24), which are deemed more appropriate for asylum seekers. Here there is a spatial reference in terms of having the ‘families’ spaced out – ‘maybe two families (.) in the one street (.) two families in another street’ (l. 25) – in order to help integration. This is in comparison

to the description ‘lump all families together’ (l. 26), whereby ‘lump’ can be heard negatively, particularly as seeming careless or without strategy and therefore not rational. Here also is a form of systematic vagueness (Edwards & Potter, 1992) in terms of the reference to ‘disquiet’ (l. 28) that was seen to result from the families being ‘lumped’ together in the ‘high risers’; this has the effect of suggesting there was some negative reaction from the local community, and that this had to do with the way in which asylum seekers were housed, without having to get into the specifics in ways that may be more easily challenged. It also has the effect of implying that having large numbers of asylum seekers together – ‘en masse’ (l. 30) – causes a negative reaction in the local population; this is not necessarily a positive suggestion, as although it does not condone the response, it does not criticise it either and does imply that the mere presence of asylum seekers can cause a negative response rather than, say, the negative response being due to racism or other unreasonable views.

The extract therefore constructs integration as relating to the spatial organisation of people. In particular, the construction of asylum seekers as vulnerable is contrasted with the construction of the high-rise flats as unsafe so as to argue against them being housed there. Furthermore, the concentration of asylum seekers in one place is presented as being problematic and as playing a vaguely-defined role in creating problems in intercultural relations. In this way, the constructions of place and integration work to advocate particular policies in relation to asylum seekers, specifically a policy of dispersing asylum seekers across communities.

The following extract, from a professional, also addresses the role of accommodation in integration but does so by contrasting the experiences of adult asylum seekers with that of their children. This extract comes from a section of the interview in which the interviewee was talking about the contact between asylum seekers and other members of the local population.

*Extract 22: Professional 16*

- 1 P16 it is about exposure, it is about integration, but it's also about us creating those  
2 opportunities for networking and integration [because]  
3 SK [right]  
4 P16 I think people again because of their housing they have been ghettoized, they are  
5 alienated, they are isolated (.) I have to say that in my experience working with  
6 separated children now they do better, because they tend to be placed in residential  
7 units with Scottish children  
8 SK oh I see  
9 P16 so from very very early on, in fact from immediately upon arrival they are thrown  
10 into (.) um a situation where they have to learn English really quickly, they do have  
11 to work out what's going on really quickly (.) obviously they're young people, they  
12 wanna go out, they wanna have fun, they wanna get clothes they want to go to the  
13 pictures they wanna do (.) so in fact they do it much better and much more quickly  
14 because they're forced into it and [they have]  
15 SK [I see]  
16 P16 to fit into it whereas I think (.) still because of our housing policies, we have people  
17 who are ghettoized, who are alienated (.) and it's a bit more contrived actually trying  
18 to work out how to get people to integrate and it's a bit more (.) stilted, it's a  
19 SK [right]  
20 P16 [bit more] controlled  
21 SK yeah  
22 P16 whereas the kids do get on with it

In lines 1-2, the interviewee suggests that contact between asylum seekers, refugees and locals requires that people are exposed to each other, and suggests that it goes beyond this, in that opportunities need to be created in order for people to meet each other. In particular, saying 'but it's also about us creating those opportunities' (ll. 1-2) functions to highlight the responsibility of people other than the refugees and asylum seekers; that is, other members of the local population, broadly defined, are portrayed as having a role

to play in integration. In lines 4-5, the interviewee goes on to suggest that the way in which asylum seekers have been housed has lead to them being ‘ghettoized’, ‘alienated’ and ‘isolated’. These results are hearably negative, in the same way that the mode of ‘segregation’ in Berry’s (1997) acculturation model is not merely a neutral way of describing a particular set of social relations, but also has obvious negative connotations. Moreover, in this case the construction presents the ‘housing’ as being the agent in determining the integration process so that it is the accommodation arrangements, rather than, say, the actions of asylum seekers, that are portrayed as being responsible for the implied lack of integration.

In lines 4-10, the interviewee suggests that children who are separated from their families actually make better progress in terms of integration because they are forced into contact with Scottish children and are therefore required to learn English quickly. This contrasts with the previous construction of the segregation caused by standard housing policies, and together they suggest that the close proximity of people of different groups is important for integration, whether this is forced – ‘they are thrown into [...] a situation’ (ll. 9-10) – or more through people’s own volition – ‘opportunities’ (l. 2). In lines 11-13, Professional 16 constructs the children in such a way to suggest that they actively seek out enjoyable and social activities: ‘go out’, ‘have fun’, ‘get clothes’ and ‘go to the pictures’. Constructing children in this way suggests that they will naturally integrate more quickly through their social contact and desire to fit in; this implicitly suggests that the opposite may be true for adults, in that they are less naturally predisposed to such active social engagement and therefore integration. This is reinforced in lines 16-18, as those others are once again portrayed as ‘ghettoized’ and ‘alienated’ and therefore attempts at integration are more ‘contrived’ or artificial. The implication is that contact that occurs ‘naturally’ is more effective at assisting integration and is also hard to replicate.

Overall this extract involves a complex set of constructions in relation to integration, accommodation and asylum seeker identity. Specifically, housing policy is constructed as a determinant of integration so that geographical proximity is presented as a major driver of integration. Furthermore, adult asylum seekers are constructed

differently than young asylum seekers, so that the young people are presented as more naturally disposed to activities that will lead to integration. Responsibility for integration (or lack therefore) is thus shifted off adult asylum seekers.

The following extract similarly focuses on the responsibilities in relation to integration. The extract is from the interviewee's response to a question about how well asylum seekers and refugees adjust to life in Scotland and is in the context of a discussion about access to employment.

*Extract 23: Professional 2*

- 1 P2 I think the success rate could be a lot higher if the attitude (1.0) of some members of  
2 the community change (.)
- 3 SK mmm
- 4 P2 and if people have to understand that (1.0) um (3.0) these people are already here,  
5 whether they like it or not, under international law, Britain are signed up (1.0) and  
6 they have to honour its obligation (0.8) and if they can understand that (1.5) they  
7 should rather be promoting integration (1.2) and that (1.0) integration is a two way  
8 process
- 9 SK mm-hmm
- 10 P2 it's not (0.6) th- th- th- the majority culture (1.2) recolonising the minority culture by  
11 forcing its meals its language its way of life on people

In lines 1-2, the interviewee suggests that refugees and asylum seekers would adjust to Scotland better if the attitudes 'of some members of the community' were improved, which places some responsibility for integration upon general members of the public. By then arguing in lines 4-6 that 'people have to understand' about the presence of asylum seekers and refugees and the UK's legal obligations, he suggests that negative attitudes within the host society may be due to a lack of knowledge. As with some of the extracts analysed in previous sections of the thesis (e.g., extracts 12, 14, 16, 17 & 19), this construction suggests that these negative attitudes may disappear when people learn the

‘truth’ but also that there are other external responsibilities for bringing about these understandings, perhaps through campaigning and advocacy.

By highlighting that asylum seekers are ‘here’, the interviewee implies that it is not a question of keeping people out of the country or even removing them once they have arrived, but rather it is about dealing with them in the communities in which they have now come to belong. The mixture of legal and emotive language used to describe Britain’s ‘obligation’ (l. 6) to refugees and asylum seekers suggests that it is a legal requirement to provide sanctuary to refugees, and therefore not doing so would be criminal and therefore unacceptable. Moreover, constructing the issue as something Britain has to ‘honour’ (l. 6) portrays this as an ethical national responsibility, thus suggesting that it is in the national interests, and therefore should be supported (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001), as well as implying that not meeting this ‘obligation’ may risk Britain’s national pride in providing protection to those who need it (Pirouet, 2001).

In lines 7-11, the interviewee constructs integration as a two-way process, challenging the standard approaches to acculturation which conceive change as mostly occurring among the minority group (Berry, 1997). Constructing integration as two-way suggests that, when there is contact between cultural groups, there is a responsibility on the host culture to change in some ways and / or that this contact will result in some change among the host culture. This challenges the implicit links between integration and assimilation that can be found in public discourse, whereby what is referred to as integration often holds the assumption that it is up to the incoming group to change (Bowskill et al., 2007). In lines 10-11, the interviewee makes this challenge explicit, by arguing that integration is not about incoming people having the ‘majority culture’ forced on them. By describing this as non-consensual, using the descriptions of ‘recolonising’ (l. 10) and ‘forcing’ (l. 11), the interviewee implies that being forced to take on another’s culture entirely is unethical and that it is also a misconception of the process of integration.

Overall then, this extract constructs the host society as being at least partially responsible for integration through portraying Britain as having a legal and moral obligation to asylum seekers and refugees. Moreover, integration is constructed as a

two-way process through portraying one-way forms of integration as involving unethical elements of force. The following extract further develops the notion of two-way integration by highlighting the benefits that this brings.

*Extract 24: Professional 3*

- 1 SK what amount of contact do um asylum seekers and refugees have with other  
2 communitie:s or with other people from the same nationality and that sort of thing?  
3 P3 eh (.) hhh that's why I'm here (.) that's why my organisation come to life (1.8) we  
4 are going to make integration to the community  
5 SK okay  
6 P3 there must be still barriers and (2.0) I mean, are things and obstacles which is  
7 preventing the community to integrate with other people including the culture (.) the  
8 religion and things like that  
9 SK sure  
10 P3 but (1.0) to be honest with you, when two communities or three communities or four  
11 communities come together (1.0) they will, what's it called? e:em (.) reconciling each  
12 other (0.8) if a community is learning from the other community their good side (0.6)  
13 they will draw- they clean out the other community's their bad- (.) bad culture or bad  
14 behaviour=  
15 SK =right  
16 P3 or bad things like that  
17 SK yeah  
18 P3 (.) so that is making the life very better

The interviewee answers the interview question about contact by suggesting this is the reason for his organisation existing (1.3). Specifically, he says that 'we are going to make integration to the community' (ll. 3-4), and thus equates intercultural contact with integration. As with extract 9, the interviewee makes reference to various problems – including 'barriers' and 'obstacles' (l. 6) – which justify the existence of the organisation through constructing and identifying issues that the organisation will help



to address. In this way, the interviewee answers the question by specifying that this issue – contact (or lack thereof) between asylum seekers and others in the community – is specifically the problem that needs to be addressed. In doing so, the interviewee suggests that ‘culture’ and ‘religion’ (ll. 7-8) may constitute specific barriers in relation to integration. The interviewee therefore builds up integration as a problem in the sense that it is not happening without intervention.

However, from line 10, the interviewee goes on to reconstrue integration so that it is not simply a problem. In particular, starting with ‘but (1.0) to be honest with you’ (l. 10) signals that the subsequent account should be taken as a more fair and accurate assessment of integration (Edwards & Fasulo, 2006). This seeming contradiction suggests that the interviewee is managing a dilemma (Van den Berg, 2003). More specifically, constructing integration as a problem may function to justify the existence of his organisation, but it risks constituting asylum seekers and refugees as a problem themselves. The interviewee then deals with this dilemma by presenting integration as something that is beneficial. Thus, in lines 10-12, the interviewee suggests that when different ‘communities’ come together it results in them ‘reconciling each other’. This suggests that they bring themselves into friendly relations with each other and / or that they come together in a form of mutual agreement. In lines 12-16, the interviewee goes on to suggest that this process involves each side ‘learning’ about the good parts of the other communities, and therefore ‘bad culture or bad behaviour or bad things like that’ are ‘clean[ed] out’.

This construction extends the previous extract’s portrayal of integration as two-way by highlighting the positive results of this process. Specifically, it suggests that two-way integration benefits all cultural communities, as the good aspects are shared and the negative aspects are removed. Not only does it suggest that the incoming cultures have positive things to provide to the host society, but it suggests integration has inherent benefits for the host society and further emphasises the importance of change on both parts. The interviewee then provides the upshot of this construction by suggesting that this process results in ‘making the life very better’ (l. 18).

Whereas the last two extracts developed a two-way concept of integration, the following extract takes this even further by suggesting that integration needs to occur within the majority group itself. This extract is from near the end of their response to a question about what could be done to better help asylum seekers and refugees, and deals with the issue of funding for voluntary organisations.

*Extract 25: Professional 5*

- 1 P5 I think (0.8) probably if we weren't here (1.8) then people would find it very difficult  
2 SK right sure  
3 P5 (1.0) so probably that question would be (0.7) that they they'd still continue to fund  
4 (1.3) grassroots organisations that [deliver]  
5 SK [sure]  
6 P5 that deliver em (1.0) vital services for (.) em the community  
7 SK yeah (.) okay  
8 P5 (.) because it is about integration, it's no just about asylum and refugees it's also  
9 about  
10 SK right  
11 P5 coz in the communities we live in we (.) we have (.) high deprivation and  
12 unemployment (.) drugs and alcohol misuse  
13 SK right  
14 P5 so (1.0) it's not one lot of people you're trying to integrate, we have (.) whole  
15 communities (.)  
16 SK yeah  
17 P5 that we're trying to integrate

As with the previous extract, here the interviewee answers the question in such a way as to justify the existence of her organisation. In particular, she states that 'if we weren't here (1.8) then people would find it very difficult' (l. 1), suggesting that her organisation is justified on the grounds that it helps people in the local area. In this way, the interviewee argues for the continuation of funding to her organisation (ll. 3-6). In part,

this is achieved through construing their work as involving the delivery of ‘vital services for [...] the community’ (l. 6). This construction works by not only portraying the work as essential, but also as being in the interests of the ‘community’; as discussed in the previous chapter, the ‘community’ constitutes an appropriate beneficiary for activities in the local area, making this legitimate grounds for justifying the organisation’s existence.

What is particularly interesting about this extract is the way in which the interviewee goes on to explain how the work of the organisation, and the notion of ‘community’ she is invoking, extend beyond the specific interests of asylum seekers and refugees. She begins this by stating that ‘because it is about integration, it’s not just about asylum and refugees’ (l. 8). This formulation implies that the issue of integration is also relevant to those who are not asylum seekers and refugees. The interviewee develops this argument through highlighting some of the problems that exist in the local area: ‘in the communities we live in we (.) we have (.) high deprivation and unemployment (.) drugs and alcohol misuse’ (ll. 11-12). The construction of these problems suggests that the ‘vital services for [...] the community’ (l. 6) are needed for general members of the local community. In this way, the interviewee is able to construct integration as something that is needed for all members of the local community: ‘it’s not one lot of people you’re trying to integrate, we have (.) whole communities [...] that we’re trying to integrate’ (ll. 14-17). In this way, the concepts of community, integration, the aims of the organisation and the needs of asylum seekers and refugees are all brought together so that they are portrayed as coterminous. That is, asylum seekers and refugees are presented as part of the community, and the organisation is presented as addressing integration, and both asylum seekers / refugees and other members of the local population are presented as having issues that the organisation helps to address under the auspices of integration.

This extract is particularly interesting as it illustrates a construction of integration that challenges more assimilationist versions (Bowskill et al., 2007) and instead draws on an account that can be applied to anyone in the community, including non-migrants (Ager and Strang, 2004a). Moreover, this account suggests that integration is not simply about integrating asylum seekers and refugees with a pre-existing and homogenous local

community, but rather it also involves integrating already present members of the local community with each other. This provides a serious challenge to standard conceptions of acculturation which tend to imply that incomers adapt to an already existing cultural community rather than also portraying the potential divisions within the host society or the need for non-migrants to become integrated with other locals (e.g., Berry, 1997). This conception also has important consequences for practice: rather than asylum seekers and refugees being the sole 'client group' for integration services, it is now potentially extended to cover any members of the local community, regardless of immigration status. This construction also addresses the potential perception that integration services are only for asylum seekers and refugees, which may be a point of conflict between asylum seekers and locals who see resources being 'diverted' to people coming into the area when a need already exists in the local community for assistance (Wren, 2007; Barclay et al., 2003).

The following extract illustrates that Scottish locals may also construct integration as being two-way and may specifically criticise the one-way conception of integration. The extract follows a discussion in which the interviewee talked about issues asylum seekers had in terms of integration and some of the 'trouble' that occurred when asylum seekers were first dispersed to the area.

*Extract 26: Local 8*

- 1 SK so you said there was a bit of trouble, what sort of form did that take?  
2 L8 (1.0) there was eh (1.9) I think (1.1) because it's quite socially deprived here (.)  
3 people thought (.) that they were gettin' things (.) for nothing (.) that they weren't  
4 gettin' and that kinda caused a lot of (.) they get this (0.7) they get that, they get this  
5 free that free  
6 SK right  
7 L8 we've got to do this, we don't get this and it still does go on (.) quite a bit  
8 SK mm  
9 L8 (.) they don't realise >I don't know how many times< say they've organised a bus trip

10 (1.4) people don't realise that they're welcome to go as integration (.)  
 11 SK right  
 12 L8 they think integration means (0.8) just refugees  
 13 SK right okay  
 14 L8 and they're- it's oh their kids get it for nothing (.) how do our kids not get it? (0.7)  
 15 well they do  
 16 SK heh=  
 17 L8 =ya bring them down into integration (0.8) then they will get it I think it's the word  
 18 integration they don't get  
 19 SK ah okay  
 20 L8 integration just means (0.6) refugee↑  
 21 SK right  
 22 L8 to a lot of people round here  
 23 SK ah I see  
 24 L8 ↓so that's a bit o' a ↑shame but that's just the way it is  
 25 SK right=  
 26 L8 =and I think now that they've been accepted that they're here, coz they've been here  
 27 for a while now  
 28 SK mmm  
 29 L8 that (0.7) the asylum seekers and refugees should now (.) try mix

This extract begins with the interviewee being asked to elaborate on the 'trouble' that arose when asylum seekers first came to the area and which she had previously mentioned in the interview. The interviewee begins her answer by commenting on the sorts of discourse produced by locals, such as that illustrated in extracts 10 and 11, regarding the impression that asylum seekers were 'gettin' things (.) for nothing' (l. 3). As previously mentioned, this characterisation of resource allocation implies that asylum seekers are receiving resources unfairly, therefore justifying antagonism against them. Furthermore, the interviewee presents the local area as 'quite socially deprived' (l. 2), which is presented as an explanation for the resulting conflict over resources. However, she goes on to suggest that this view is incorrect by stating that 'they don't realise' (l. 9),

before giving an account of the true situation. This is similar to some previous extracts, such as extract 15, whereby antagonism is accounted for by a false understanding of the situation. In this case the interviewee suggests that one source of the problem is that some local people have a misconception regarding the term ‘integration’ (l. 10).

From line 9 onwards, the interviewee explains the nature of the misunderstanding in relation to integration. Firstly, the notion of ‘integration’ in line 9 suggests that it is a form of process or activity that applies both to local people and to refugees: ‘they’re welcome to go as integration’. As with other extracts, where negative views towards asylum seekers are related to a lack of knowledge or understanding, here the ‘true’ nature of these activities is presented as being open to locals and refugees, and local people have a distorted view they leads them to make negative judgements: ‘people don’t realise’ (l. 9), ‘they think’ (l. 12). These two formulations of integration map on to one-way and two-way conceptualisations, so that the view attributed to locals implies that it is refugees who are responsible and active in terms of integration processes whereas the second view – which is presented as the correct view by the interviewee – is that both locals and refugees can and / or should be involved in integration. In part this works by presenting the reported speech of locals – ‘oh their kids get it for nothing (.) how do our kids not get it?’ (l. 14) – which allows the interviewee to then comment on the problems with this view. By constructing the issue in this way, the antagonism that is presented as being held by local people is both criticised and to some extent excused by associating it with misunderstanding. Moreover, this construction implies that the allocation of resources solely to refugees may be problematic, and has an inbuilt notion of ‘us’ and ‘them’ – ‘their kids [...] our kids’ (l. 14) – but the problem is avoided as these activities are presented as being open to both refugees and to local people. As with the previous extract, this functions to deal with any accusations that the activities associated with integration networks amount to special privileges for refugees. Applying the concept of integration to both refugees and local people works in a similar way to those constructions of ‘community’ that include refugees (e.g., extracts 8 & 12), in that they present everyone as belonging to the same group, thus dealing with apparent conflicts over resource allocation.

However, while the first part of this extract seems to suggest that responsibility for integration falls on both locals and refugees, the latter part of the extract suggests that it is refugees who are responsible for integration. This is done by drawing on the ‘false’ understanding of integration that is allegedly held by locals, and rather than making a case for how this should be challenged, the interviewee suggests that this is a unchangeable, if regrettable, fact of reality: ‘↓so that's a bit o' a ↑shame but that's just the way it is’ (l. 24). Presenting the situation in this way shifts the final responsibility back on to refugees. In particular this is done by drawing on a notion of the way time has created circumstances in which refugees may now become involved in the local community – ‘they’ve been here for a while now’ (ll. 26-27) – and so ending by stating that it is the refugees who should take action: ‘the asylum seekers and refugees should now (.) try mix’ (l. 29). As illustrated by Tileaga (2005), this type of construction places the blame upon asylum seekers for any apparent lack of integration. This extract therefore presents a more complex view of integration than that found in the research by Bowskill et al. (2007), so that different notions of integration are juxtaposed, and in fact it is the notion of two-way integration that is presented as being true, which both legitimises the work of the integration network and places some responsibility on local people for integration. However, this construction is then undermined, not by challenging its accuracy as such, but rather by suggesting the false view is the one that is held by local people and therefore difficult to change, so that responsibility for integration ultimately falls on refugees themselves.

As with extract 26, the following extract highlights the role of refugees and asylum seekers in the process of integration. Whereas the interview discourse from most of the professionals tended to focus on the external forces in relation to integration (e.g., extracts 22 & 23), this extract is unusual in that it suggests some asylum seekers or refugees may be reluctant to integrate. This extract constitutes part of the interviewee’s response to a question about the issues that are most important or difficult for asylum seekers and refugees.

*Extract 27: Professional 14*

- 1 P14 uh most sometime um (1.1) some people (.) it's very difficult to trust (0.8) and other  
2 people [trustful]  
3 SK [oh]  
4 P14 so  
5 SK oh right=  
6 P14 =somebody say oh (0.6) I don't want to be integrated (0.8) because maybe they feel  
7 wrong about me about about them so I don't want to be part of their society=  
8 SK =I see  
9 P14 so (.) sometimes if they can see (.) um (.) all the issues printed (.) in newspapers (.) or  
10 in the local community and say (.) no I don't want to be integrated (.) so that could be  
11 also a barrier  
12 SK °oh°  
13 P14 of what (.) but how to break these barriers  
14 SK right=  
15 P14 =so that means that (0.6) for organisations like (0.7) our organisation (.) to help them  
16 feel (0.7) to think about it twice (0.6) so to be um (.) reserved (.) against the society  
17 so um (1.0) that will be so sometimes trustful trust sometimes (.) you're reserved but  
18 as long as you (.) you understand the system, you understand the person in front of  
19 you (.) and then you will begin  
20 SK right=  
21 P14 =to trust (.) this will enable sometimes also uh (0.8) to do something about the  
22 problem they face

The extract begins with the interviewee splitting 'people' into two categories: those who find it 'very difficult to trust' and those who are 'trustful' (ll. 1-2). This draws on commonsense notions of individual variation and allows the interviewee to speak about some 'difficult' characteristics of asylum seekers and refugees without having to make broad negative generalisations that could be considered sensitive. The use of reported speech – 'oh (0.6) I don't want to be integrated' (l. 6) – provides a level of detail to the



argument that lends it a sense of reality while also allowing the interviewee some distance from the statement, whereby he neither supports nor criticises this position, yet it allows him to comment on its consequences. The reported speech presents the barriers to integration as lying with elements of the local population – ‘maybe they feel wrong about me’ (ll. 6-7) – and the reported speaker’s identity is constructed as existing outside that of the local community – ‘I don’t want to be part of their society’ (l. 7). The potential barriers to integration are also presented as relating to ‘issues’ that are seen in the media or local community (ll. 9-10). Unlike the research by Bowskill et al. (2007), and the previous extracts in this section, where integration is always presented as possessing an implicit and unchallenged positivity, here integration is presented as containing some problematic aspects in the views of some asylum seekers and refugees. Moreover, this view is constructed as reasonable, as it is presented as stemming from implied antagonism from the local population and troubling issues in the local community, and is backed with things that asylum seekers and refugees have allegedly said, so it becomes an understandable response, rather than, say, an unreasonable position held by people who simply do not want to be involved in the host society. This construction works in part through the opposition between the asylum seeker and the local society – ‘I’ and ‘their society’ (l. 7) – which allows the speaker to talk of ‘barriers’ (ll. 11 & 13) between them, and implies a responsibility on the behalf of the host society to change in some way to address these problems, rather than responsibility falling solely on refugees and asylum seekers themselves.

This construction of the problem leads into a brief discussion of the role of the interviewee’s organisation. In this case, the difficulty that some asylum seekers and refugees are said to have in relation to trust is not directly challenged, and is instead put to one side, so that it is presented as reasonable, and the interviewee can talk about the role of the organisation: ‘but as long as you (.) you understand the system, you understand the person in front of you’ (ll. 17-19). In this way, the role of the organisation is emphasised, in terms of understanding and assisting asylum seekers, so that trust is built, which may overcome these ‘barriers’ in relation to integration. Overall then, this extract constructs integration as having some potentially problematic aspects,

and suggests that these lie with the (understandable) concerns of asylum seekers and refugees, as well as negative attitudes and other issues of concern in the local community, at least in the eyes of some asylum seekers and refugees. This functions to place some responsibility on the local community as well as highlight the importance of the organisation in assisting asylum seekers and refugees to work through these issues. While there is an underlying implication that integration is something desirable – hence the focus on dealing with the ‘barriers’ – this construction also presents integration in a way that at least partially legitimises occasional resistance to integration, therefore protecting against negative evaluations of asylum seekers and refugees who choose not to integrate.

Overall, the analyses in this section illustrate a variety of ways in which integration may be constructed and highlight some of the functions this may perform. More specifically, some of the extracts constructed integration as being related to the spatial or geographical location of people. In this construction, the policy of housing asylum seekers in high-rise flats in deprived areas was criticised for being counterproductive for integration. This type of argument works to shift some of the responsibility for integration off asylum seekers and refugees. Similarly, some of the extracts constructed integration as two-way, which functioned to emphasise the responsibility of members of the host society in working towards integration or portrayed integration as having benefits for the host society. Moreover, some extracts presented integration as being applicable to non-migrant members of the local population. This served to justify the work of the support organisations, by suggesting that they act in the interests of all members of the community, while also countering the impression that asylum seekers were receiving preferential treatment. However some extracts highlighted the responsibility of asylum seekers and refugees in relation to integration, either in terms of needing to take an active role in integrating or possibly being reluctant to integrate. These analyses have added to previous discursive research on integration (e.g., Durrheim & Dixon, 2005; Bowskill et al., 2007) by illustrating some of the alternative ways in which this notion may be constructed and the various functions this may perform.

## Conclusions

This second empirical chapter builds on the previous chapter, which focused on arguments regarding the presence of asylum seekers and refugees, by analysing interview extracts that relate to relations between asylum seekers / refugees and the local population. Following the work of Durrheim and Dixon (2005) and Bowskill et al. (2007), the analyses illustrated the ways in which the constructions function to justify or criticise particular sets of social relations. The three sections dealt with three interrelated aspects of these social relations: 1) the way the public perception and media presentation of asylum seekers and refugees was constructed; 2) the way that asylum seekers and refugees portrayed their experiences of antagonism, racism and violence from the host society; and 3) the way that notions of integration were constructed and the apparent consequences of these constructions.

One of the commonalities across the sections in this chapter is the way in which notions of ignorance or misunderstanding were used to criticise particular views or behaviours. For instance, some constructions of public perception suggested that antagonism was due to local people having a lack of knowledge about asylum seekers and refugees or specifically not knowing the truth about the allocation of resources to asylum seekers. In this case, it was implied that the antagonism would be addressed if people had more accurate knowledge about resource allocation. Similarly, some of the refugees' and asylum seekers' accounts of potential racism or violence suggested that this was due to people not knowing about asylum seekers' reasons for being in the host society. This implied that the antagonism and violence would not occur if the local people had a better understanding of asylum seekers' reasons for being in the UK. This issue was also evident in some of the extracts in the third section, as some interviewees suggested that some local people did not understand that integration is a two-way process. Here the extracts implied that social relations would be improved if local people recognised their responsibilities / opportunities for being involved in integration.

Portraying the situation in this way seems to perform a number of related functions. It suggests that the 'real' nature of the world is such that asylum seekers and refugees have a legitimate place in the host society. It also reduces the culpability of the local population to some extent by suggesting that any antagonism is due to misunderstanding rather than, say, malicious intent. Furthermore, it implies that antagonism has the potential to be addressed through education or greater understanding among the local population. In line with the research of Colic-Peisker (2005) and Verkuyten (2005a), these constructions emphasise the possibilities for positive social change and portray asylum seekers and refugees as having a place in the host society. Moreover, these types of constructions avoid making general negative evaluations of parts of the host society, which could be taken unfavourably and may also imply that the antagonism is ingrained in a way that suggests asylum seekers and refugees do not belong in the UK.

It is also interesting to note that issues relating to employment and / or the economy were prevalent across the three sections. As illustrated in extracts 10 and 11 in the previous chapter, these issues were often presented as being relevant to locals' antagonistic views or behaviour towards asylum seekers and refugees. Across some extracts from Scottish locals, professionals and asylum seekers / refugees, antagonism was related to a perception that asylum seekers or refugees were 'taking' jobs from local people or otherwise having preferential access to resources. This argument implies that jobs and resources 'belong' to a particular country and that members of that country have a priority to those jobs and resources over non-nationals. Moreover, reference to the economic climate is presented as a potential explanation or excuse for antagonistic behaviour to asylum seekers and refugees. Rather than challenging this notion directly, the arguments tended to portray asylum seekers as being in the UK because they needed help rather than for work, suggested that asylum seekers did not receive preferential treatment or suggested that local people also had access to these resources. This is interesting as it implies that such references to the economy, employment and resource allocation may function as self-sufficient arguments (Augoustinos et al., 1999; Wetherell & Potter, 1992) in terms of explaining antagonism against foreigners and are therefore

difficult to challenge. Therefore, instead of directly challenging this notion, the interviewees tended to suggest that this account did not apply in this case.

In addition to the commonalities across the sections in this chapter, some of the sections have specific implications for research and theory in this area. In particular, the section relating to racism has important implications for research on this topic. For instance, some of the analyses backed up previous research that has found minority group members may minimise or deny the existence of racism (Colic-Peisker, 2005; Verkuyten, 2005a), even in cases where they have been the victims of violence at the hands of the majority group, and where this appears to be racially motivated. Moreover, the analyses supported previous research that has highlighted the sensitivity of making accusations of racism (e.g., Chiang, 2010; Every & Augoustinos, 2007; Goodman, 2010; Goodman & Burke, 2010; Riggs & Due, 2010), as such accusations tended to be produced as reluctant, tentative and only after eliminating other potential explanations. Interestingly, in some of the accounts of experience of violence the interviewees denied that the violence was racially motivated yet put the issue of racism ‘in play’ so that the actions could be heard as potentially racism while allowing the interviewee to avoid some of the problems that are associated with making direct accusations of racism. It may be that accusations of racism are particularly difficult for asylum seekers and refugees, for whom such accusations may be taken as signs of being ungrateful. Moreover, these accusations are particularly sensitive given that asylum seekers come to a host society in search of protection from persecution; accusing the host society of discriminatory acts may run the risk of undermining the seriousness of the persecution they have fled or otherwise discredit their claims for asylum. Unfortunately, these constructions also function to make racism harder to identify and challenge.

The third section of this chapter also has particular implications for research relating to integration and acculturation. As with research by Durrheim & Dixon (2005), some of the extracts illustrated forms of place-identity that worked to regulate the positioning of particular groups in the host society. In particular, some extracts suggested that the high-rise flats that accommodated most asylum seekers were in opposition to the identities of asylum seekers and / or counterproductive for integration.

In this regard, integration was portrayed as being strongly related to the spatial / geographical arrangement of asylum seekers and refugees in the host society. Furthermore, such constructions implied that housing policy was responsible to a large degree for the integration experiences of asylum seekers and refugees, which shifted the responsibility away from individual asylum seekers. Similarly, some constructions drew on the two-way notions of integration (Castles et al., 2002), implying that members of the host society had responsibilities and / or opportunities in relation to integration. Integration was also portrayed as having potential positive benefits for members of the local society and the concept was applied to non-migrant members of the host society. Interestingly, one extract from a professional suggested that integration could be problematic and appeared to engage with a dilemma in terms of justifying the work of his organisation while managing a potentially negative portrayal of asylum seekers. Overall these constructions build on the previous research of Bowskill et al. (2007) by identifying alternative ways in which integration may be constructed.

These constructions may have close ties to the ways in which asylum seekers and refugees are perceived, for instance depending on whether local people see themselves as having a responsibility in relation to integration and being able to benefit from some of the services in the local area. Different concepts of integration may also be reflected in the ways that services and policies are initiated. For example, a broad conception of integration that includes all members of the local society may be used to justify the provision of more general services but may lack the specificity required to deal with the unique needs of asylum seekers and refugees. The two-way version of integration also puts more emphasis on the host society's responsibility in relation to integration and may result in initiatives that involve members of the local community to a greater degree.

So far the empirical chapters in this thesis have addressed the arguments relating to the presence of asylum seekers and refugees, and ways in which the relations between asylum seekers / refugees and the host society have been constructed. The remaining empirical chapter will build upon these analyses by addressing an essential part of the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees: the asylum system itself.



## Ch. 5. The asylum system

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*I don't need a passport to walk on this Earth  
Anywhere I go 'cause I was made of this Earth*  
-Michael Franti and Spearhead (2006) from the song 'Hello Bonjour'

So far this thesis has covered analyses regarding arguments for and against the presence of asylum seekers in the UK and a variety of constructions relating to relations between asylum seekers / refugees and members of the host society. This chapter further extends the analysis by focusing on discourse relating to the asylum system and its consequences. As discussed in the literature review, although the asylum system is based on the United Nations Geneva Convention of 1951 relating to the Status of Refugees, and is therefore in theory driven by providing protection to people fleeing persecution, the system contains elements related to deterrence and control that could be considered harmful to refugees. Although the general policy orientation of deterrence is allegedly targeted at those who are ineligible for refugee status, it has resulted in all asylum seekers being subject to a range of exclusionary and punitive policies (Da Lomba, 2010).

For those who manage to lodge an asylum claim in the UK, there is evidence that the process for refugee status determination works on a presumption of refusal, which has been characterised as a 'culture of disbelief' or a 'culture of denial' (Souter, 2011), and can make it very difficult for applicants to have their claims accepted (Baillot, Cowan & Munro, 2009). Furthermore, asylum seekers are generally not permitted to engage in paid employment, which has negative effects on their experiences during the asylum process, as well as making accessing employment and integrating more difficult



once their claim is accepted (Smyth & Kum, 2010). Asylum seekers also face the constant threat of being detained, which has been described as often arbitrary and unfair (Malloch & Stanley, 2005) as well as being damaging to people who are often already vulnerable (Bosworth, 2008; Bracken & Gorst-Unsworth, 1991). Those who have their asylum claims refused may find themselves destitute, as they are not entitled to access benefits or employment; people who are in this situation may receive a limited amount of support if they sign up for 'voluntary return' to their country of origin, but many do not do so due to fears regarding the danger to their lives on return (Green, 2006). Furthermore, this support is provided through the use of the 'Azure card', a cashless form of support that limits the places and ways in which the money may be spent, resulting in a number of difficulties for people, including maintaining basic health and engaging with the asylum system (Reynolds, 2010).

The asylum system therefore closely relates to the way asylum seekers and refugees are positioned in the host society. This positioning determines the types of rights and resources to which they are given access. The concept of 'subject position' (Davies and Harré, 1990) is therefore particularly relevant to the topic of this chapter. Davies and Harré suggested that this concept is useful to analysing how people position themselves and others in the course of an unfolding conversation. For instance, Hollway (1984) and Wetherell (1998) have illustrated the usefulness of this approach in understanding how certain gender and sexuality positions are produced through discourse. Hardy (2003) applied this concept in relation to the asylum system in order to analyse how discourse constrains the positions of asylum seekers and refugees, and also how it may be challenged. For instance, she illustrated that the asylum system determines who is or is not a 'refugee', and therefore works to position people on these grounds. However, she also illustrated that refugees may engage with the system in such a way as to influence who is considered a refugee. In this chapter I intend to extend this analysis by focusing in more detail on how the interviewees discuss the way the asylum system works to 'position' refugees and asylum seekers as well as the ways they may attempt to resist some of these positions.

As discussed above, some of the key issues in relation to the asylum system are: 1) the refugee status determination process; 2) the right of asylum seekers to work; and 3) destitution, detention and deportation. These topics also constituted some of the most commonly raised issues in the interviews. This chapter begins by addressing the first topic as it is a central element of the asylum system with important consequences for asylum seekers. Almost all of the professionals raised the problem of asylum seekers' right to work, as did several of the other interviewees, suggesting that this is a particularly important issue for investigation in terms of asylum seekers' experiences in the host society. Finally, the issues of destitution, detention and deportation are considered together as these are closely linked: those who have their asylum claims rejected run the risk of becoming destitute, in which case they may be forced to sign up for 'voluntary return'; detention may be used at various stages of the asylum process, but particularly before deportation; and all asylum seekers, particularly those whose claims have been unsuccessful, are under the threat of being deported to the country they fled.

### **The refugee status determination process**

The process of determining someone's refugee status is obviously a central aspect of an asylum seeker's experience in a host society and the outcome of this process determines the experiences that follow, including whether the individual will be able to remain in the host country. Although this process is ostensibly designed to determine whether an applicant has a 'well-founded fear of being persecuted' based on available evidence about the individual and information regarding their country of origin, in practice this evidence is unavailable, often due to people having to flee their homes at short notice or the dangers and difficulties involved in gathering documentation, and the evidence that does exist may be ambiguous or contradictory (Hardy, 2003). For instance, a study by Cowan, Munro and Baillot (2011) used stakeholder interviews, case file analysis and court room observation to investigate the refugee status determination processes in relation to women's rape allegations in asylum appeals. Their research suggested that the burden of proof fell to the claimants whereas the Home Office only had to raise doubt

about the claim's validity; those investigating the claims often saw it as their job to 'catch out' the applicants by highlighting inconsistencies in their claims; and determinations often involved the use of cultural assumptions and gender stereotypes. Their research also supported the arguments made by Souter (2011) that the determination process involves a 'culture of disbelief', in the sense that women's claims to have been raped were often discounted, and a 'culture of denial', in that claims would be refused even in the face of evidence of a claim's validity.

In terms of 'positioning' (Davies and Harré, 1990), such a process functions to position many people as 'not refugees', despite the potential validity of their claims, and therefore refuse them the right to remain in the host society (Hardy, 2003). Moreover, this process may also function to position asylum seekers as being 'bogus', liars and criminals (Malloch & Stanley, 2005). The outcome of this process therefore has obvious material outcomes, including forcing people to return to places where their lives may be in danger. In addition, these discourses serve to justify the immigration system itself, in the sense of demonstrating that it is needed for identifying and removing these 'bogus' claimants. Furthermore, this is likely to reinforce negative views among the wider public by legitimising the view that many asylum seekers are not genuine. This section therefore focuses in detail on the ways in which interviewees talked about the refugee status determination process and the various positions that this discourse may support or challenge. Generally it was only the professionals who were in a position to make generalised claims about this aspect of the asylum system therefore the section focuses on extracts from these interviewees. The first extract is from an interview with a professional and directly addresses the issue of a 'culture of disbelief' within the Home Office in relation to the refugee status determination process.

*Extract 28: Professional 11*

- 1 SK so what would you say are the most important or most difficult issues for asylum
- 2 seekers and refugees?
- 3 P11 (1.2) okay fo:r (0.6) people in the asylum system (.) what they say I think their

4           number one issue (.) is (1.2) being believed (1.2) um havin' their case (1.0) treated  
 5           em (1.2) with a bit o' credibility (.) I think (1.0) em (1.0) I I (.) don't make it my  
 6           business to find out why people are here and what their what their story is (1.0) but  
 7           (0.8) they k- (1.2) they do um always say that (.) what they can't believe is that, is the  
 8           culture of disbelief that there is in the Home Office  
 9    SK   right  
 10   P11   everything they say is ↓challenged ↑and ↓questioned ↑and (1.2) I think it makes them  
 11           feel (1.0) well kinda (1.2) worthless you know em (.) or wrong↑ heh even though you  
 12           know what they're what they're saying is is their story and and their truth (1.4) so  
 13           that would that would be one thing (1.5) em (.) linked to that em, mental health issues  
 14           (1.0) people say (2.0) partly due to the credibility problems I think and the (.) the  
 15           effort that they need to put in to (1.0) tryin' to be believed and tryin' to get  
 16           information to support their claim

In this extract, the interviewee defines the most important issue for 'people in the asylum system' as 'being believed' (ll. 3-4). This construction makes a connection between 'belief' and 'being' in the sense that not being believed positions someone as a liar or a fraud. Furthermore, this construction positions those assessing asylum claims as being at least sceptical and at worst distrustful, implying that they have some responsibility for this situation. The interviewee presents the alternative to not being believed as 'havin' their case (1.0) treated em (1.2) with a bit o' credibility' (ll. 4-5). Presenting it in this way makes it appear reasonable – it is only 'a bit' (l. 5) – while positioning those who are assessing the claims as being unreasonable by not treating the claims with any credibility. As with several of the extracts analysed in the previous chapter, portraying it as an issue of not 'being believed' implies that there is truth to the claim that needs to be acknowledged and therefore legitimises the presence of asylum seekers and refugees. For instance, if the interviewee has rather said the problem was 'making a believable claim', this would not contain the same implications regarding the reality of asylum applicants' persecution. This construction therefore positions asylum seekers as having potentially legitimate claims that are being unfairly disbelieved while positioning those

who assess the claims as being unreasonably unbelieving of asylum seekers' testimonies.

Given these implications regarding the validity of asylum seekers' claims, the hesitations in line 5 – '(.) I think (1.0) em (1.0) I I (.)' – could be taken as the interviewee being wary of or attempting to repair these particular assertions. More specifically, the interviewee goes on to produce a disclaimer: 'I (.) don't make it my business to find out why people are here and what their what their story is' (ll. 5-6). This is similar to the construction produced by Refugee 4 in extract 16, where he said: 'I'm not gonna say all asylum seekers are genuine (.) it's not for me to say' (l. 21). Both of these disclaimers are interesting for the way in which they avoid making specific claims about the validity of *all* asylum seekers' claims and do so by positioning the interviewee as someone who is not in the appropriate position to make such judgements. In the case of this interviewee, the statement serves to pre-empt any criticism that she has complete faith in the validity of all asylum claims or that she is overstepping her role by assessing the validity of such claims, while also avoiding having to deal with the potential for some asylum seekers to have ineligible claims.

This disclaimer allows the interviewee to shift away from issues about the legitimacy of the asylum seekers' claims to focus on having their statements believed. In lines 7-8, presenting this 'disbelief' as something that asylum seekers 'always say' uses an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) so as to construct the problem as belonging to the Home Office, rather than, for example, as a problem that only belongs to a proportion of asylum seekers due to the lack of credibility in their claims. The construction of this issue as a 'culture of disbelief' (l. 8), in line with the discourse of many refugee organisations in the UK (Souter, 2011), reinforces the idea that the problem belongs to the Home Office rather than the asylum seekers and suggests that the problem is pervasive rather than incidental. Importantly, this suggests that the issue is organisational, rather than, say, due to particularly problematic or prejudiced individuals.

In line 10, the interviewee provides an incomplete three part list of what constitutes the 'culture of disbelief' as 'everything they say is ↓challenged ↑and

↓questioned ↑and (1.2)’. This has the effect of portraying the elements of being disbelieved as being comprehensive as well as allowing the speaker to continue their turn and elaborate on the nature of this disbelief (Jefferson, 1991). The extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) of ‘everything’ (l. 10) implies an unreasonableness on the part of the Home Office, as it can be heard as excessive to be challenged and questioned on ‘everything’ that someone says. The interviewee then outlines how this situation positions the asylum seekers as ‘worthless [...] or wrong’ (l. 11). She explains the absurdity of this by stating: ‘what they’re saying is is their story and and their truth’ (l. 12). In this way, the inherent worth or truthfulness of the asylum seekers’ accounts is contrasted with the way they are positioned by the Home Office, suggesting that the Home Office is acting in a way that is unethical or otherwise incorrect.

Interestingly, this account produces a relativist position on truth; that is, it suggests there may be many truths, and this is ‘their truth’ (l. 12), and so has validity. This relativist stance on truth is reinforced by the use of the word ‘story’ (l. 12), which implies that there is a subjective narrative quality to the presentation of truth. This appears to have two contradictory functions: firstly it undermines the notion of truth, as it refers not to ‘the’ truth, but to ‘their’ truth, suggesting truths are multiple; secondly it reinforces the legitimacy of the views of asylum seekers by suggesting that ‘their truth’ and ‘their story’ (l. 12) has legitimacy and no one else has the right to treat them as being wrong. In this case, the interviewee carefully manages the issue of assuming that asylum seekers are always telling ‘the’ truth, which may present her as biased or even naïve, and replaces this with the idea that truths are in fact multiple, and consequently the ‘stories’ or ‘truths’ presented by asylum seekers need be to treated with respect rather than ‘disbelief’.

The interviewee goes on to link the issue of ‘disbelief’ to the next issue of ‘mental health’ (l. 13), which suggests that there is a chain of causality between the disbelief and mental health issues, implying some blame or responsibility for the mental health of the asylum seekers on the Home Office. In this case the Home Office is doubly responsible, as the mental health problems are constructed as being due to the ‘credibility problems’ (l. 14) and the effort that asylum seekers need to put in to support

their claims (ll. 14-16), both of which stem from the Home Office's policies and procedures. This results in the Home Office being criticised not only for the issue of 'disbelief' but also for the negative impact this has on the well-being of asylum seekers.

Overall this extract illustrates how the issue of 'being believed' is worked up as being a problem within the Home Office, rather than belonging to asylum seekers. It also illustrates how the notion of an objective truth is problematised while arguing that asylum seekers' 'truths' or 'stories' deserve to be given more respect and validity than they currently receive. In terms of positioning, it suggests that the Home Office is being unreasonable to asylum seekers who in turn are being unfairly positioned as untrustworthy.

The next extract is from another professional who similarly criticised the refugee status determination process, but did so by making an accusation that the system is racist. The extract is in response to a question about what could be done to better help asylum seekers and refugees, and follows the interviewee stating that asylum seekers should be given the right to work.

*Extract 29: Professional 8*

- 1 P8 the other major thing is that the whole (1.5) um (1.0) the whole (1.2) immigration  
2 ↑sys↓tem as it applies to asylum seekers (.) needs to be (.) over- completely  
3 overhauled  
4 SK okay  
5 P8 (1.0) it is it is (1.0) it is fundamentally and utterly racist  
6 SK okay  
7 P8 um (1.0) it is bay- the whole thing is based on the assumption (1.0) that somebody  
8 who claims asylum seek- asylum in this country is a liar  
9 SK right okay  
10 P8 the assumption, it is based on the assumption that they're all bogus  
11 SK right  
12 P8 (0.8) that only a handful of them are genuine refugees (1.0) and that the the job of

In lines 1-3, the interviewee uses a form of extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) in arguing that the ‘whole immigration system as it applies to asylum seekers’ needs to be ‘completely overhauled’. As with the previous extract, portraying the system as having pervasive problems firmly constructs the faults as lying with the system, rather than, say, a minority of staff, mistakes in certain cases or with weaknesses in asylum seekers’ claims. In line 5, the interviewee goes further than Professional 11 in describing the system as ‘fundamentally and utterly racist’. In contemporary discourse, this description is hearable as implying that the system is unfair and irrational and therefore in need of change (Wetherell & Potter, 1992). This claim is also hearably more severe and controversial than the claim of a ‘culture of disbelief’ as it suggests discrimination against particular groups rather than simply a pervasive scepticism.

In lines 7-10, portraying the asylum procedure as assuming that people who claim asylum are ‘liars’, and taking this further through the maximum proportion extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) that they are ‘all bogus’, constructs the system as unfair as it involves negative and prejudiced assumptions about claimants and would contravene common-sense assumptions about natural justice, such as ‘innocent until proven guilty’. Describing the number of ‘genuine refugees’ as a ‘handful’ (l. 12) presents it as a negligible amount without having to add specific detail that might challenge the argument that ‘all’ are treated as bogus. In line 13, constructing the job of the UKBA to ‘catch them out’ reiterates the unfair assumption about the validity of asylum seekers’ claims while undermining the notion of the asylum process as balanced and investigative, suggesting that it is one-sided and discriminatory.

This construction has the effect of positioning the asylum system as being discriminatory, unfair and irrational, while positing asylum seekers as the victims of racism. This also challenges the description of asylum seekers as ‘bogus’; rather than lacking validity in their claims, asylum seekers are positioned as potentially having a legitimate claim that is refused due to the unfairness of the system. It is important to note that this characterisation works without having to engage with the issue of whether



asylum seekers are or are not ‘genuine’. This is, portraying the system as ‘racist’ and as judging people in advance of due process functions as a criticism without needing to make claims about the validity of the actual asylum claims. In terms of this highly-charged accusation, it may be significant that the speaker is British, as this may work to overcome any apparent conflicts of stake and interest that could be relevant for speakers who are asylum seekers or refugees themselves. In contrast, the next extract is from a professional interviewee who is also a refugee and illustrates how they critique the refugee status determination system. This extract is in response to a question about the issues that are most difficult for asylum seekers and refugees.

*Extract 30: Professional 3*

- 1    P3    the most difficult one is that (0.8) as you know (0.7) it’s according to the (0.9) a
- 2            procedure laid down by government when they are (0.7) assessing their application
- 3    SK    yep
- 4    P3    sometimes the right person (0.8) get (0.7) refusal↑
- 5    SK    right
- 6    P3    (1.1) because uh these are [country of origin] minority ethics and (0.7) ethnic and
- 7            (1.2) you get the refusal (1.2) you cannae change (.) it’s a it’s a it depends of the
- 8            opinion of a person
- 9    SK    right=
- 10   P3    =judging because sometimes the main idea which the people really face, the people
- 11            doesn’t have a government before twenty- last twenty years for [country of origin],
- 12            so whenever they interview (0.9) they are applying the standard interviewing system
- 13            but they ↑don’t know ↓they come from local area (0.9) very backwater life and things
- 14            like that so they are frustrating (0.6) mixing things questions everything
- 15   SK    right
- 16   P3    so (.) they are asking standard questions which they cannae answer
- 17   SK    sure okay
- 18   P3    so they are frustrate all time and they say oh never answer correctly and they give
- 19            him refusal, or her refusal (0.7) that’s the most difficult one

This extract begins with the interviewee suggesting that the most difficult issue for asylum seekers relates to the process of having ones asylum claim determined. In particular, the interviewee suggests the problem is that ‘sometimes the right person (0.8) get (0.7) refusal↑’ (l. 4). This statement contains an inherent criticism of the asylum system; as the process is purportedly intended to identify those who have a legitimate claim for asylum, stating that the ‘right person’ gets ‘refusal’ suggests that the process is not always effective. Furthermore, similar to the previous extract, this construction challenges the notion of ‘bogus asylum seeker’ to the extent that it implies a negative decision on an asylum claim does not necessarily mean that the applicant is ‘bogus’, but rather the system is flawed in particular ways that lead to wrong decisions. Moreover, the outcome of the decision is portrayed as relying on the ‘opinion of a person [...] judging’ (ll. 8-10); this implies both that it is ‘subjective’ rather than based on the evidence and that it is liable to variation depending on who happens to see the case. Therefore this construction not only suggests that the refugee status determination process is difficult for applicants, but it is also hearable as a criticism of that system for malfunctioning.

The interviewee goes on to draw on contextual information to explain how this is a particular problem for people from his country of origin, which is the group with which he most closely works. In particular, the country is presented as having been without a government for the ‘last twenty years’ (l. 11); given contemporary norms around the role of government in modern nation states, this is hearably a severe problem that is likely to cause a range of issues for inhabitants. Specifically, the interviewee relates this issue to the ‘standard interviewing system’ (l. 12) used to determine the legitimacy of asylum claims. By presenting the interview system and the context of the country of origin as being in opposition, the system is constructed as fundamentally flawed and therefore unsuited to its aim.

The reported speech of what may be assumed to be the Home Office claims officers – ‘oh never answer correctly’ (l. 18) – allows the interviewee to critically position the Home Office staff, as they can be heard to draw a conclusion that is

‘technically’ accurate but substantially inaccurate. That is, a lack of understanding on the part of the Home Office is presented as resulting in a major flaw in their assessment system and therefore the decisions they draw. This creates a slightly different overall construction compared with the previous two extracts, which argued the Home Office had a ‘culture of disbelief’ or was fundamentally racist. Rather in this case the interviewee draws on a specific issue relating to a particular country of origin to criticise the system; although this is still made out to be an organisational issue, it is not applied to all asylum seekers. It has the effect of implying that people from one country in particular are more likely to be refused asylum, even when their claims are valid, due to problems with the system.

As was expected, when the professional interviewees spoke about the refugee status determination process, they generally suggested that it created problems for applicants. However, in some limited instances, the interviewees suggested that some applicants were ‘abusing’ the asylum system. The following extract illustrates how an interviewee criticised asylum seekers rather than the system itself. This extract constitutes part of the interviewee’s response to a question about how asylum seekers and refugees are perceived by the host society.

*Extract 31: Professional 4*

- 1 P4 from my own experience it’s clear there are (0.6) people who come into the UK (1.2)
- 2 who (1.0) were not coming for reasons of asylum (2.2) and I think (1.2) the (.) UK
- 3 government had little choice, I I I think people are always quite surprised to hear me
- 4 say this (0.8) but I think the UK government actually, you had to have an
- 5 immigration policy, you can’t just you know you can’t=
- 6 SK =sure
- 7 P4 (1.0) have freedom of movement (1.0) across the world, it it it would be ridiculous
- 8 (0.8) um (0.6) so they had to have an immigration policy and if that (0.8) if people, as
- 9 they inevitably will, will find a way to exploit that immigration policy (1.0) then (1.0)
- 10 something has to be done about that now (1.5) what people did is exploit the asylum

11 pro- process (1.0) that's that that makes me quite sad that it was exploited to the  
 12 extent that it was exploited because it meant that the people who (.) have arrived here  
 13 for fear of persecution  
 14 SK mm-hmm  
 15 P4 for well-grounded fear  
 16 SK mm-hmm  
 17 P4 from their own country because it was because it was you know (.) ethnic cleansing,  
 18 because they were gay, because they follow a particular religion, whatever it might  
 19 be=  
 20 SK =yeah  
 21 P4 um (1.0) were (.) massed in (.) with all this (.) you know rhetoric about (.) you know  
 22 (.) economic migrants et cetera et cetera

This extract begins with the interviewee constructing his claims as factual by presenting them as based on his 'own experience' (l. 1). He then goes on to highlight a specific issue in relation to the asylum system: 'there are (0.6) people who come into the UK (1.2) who (1.0) were not coming for reasons of asylum' (ll. 1-2). This construction suggests that someone's purported reasons for seeking asylum – i.e., that they were fleeing persecution – may be different from their 'real' reasons – i.e., that they had other reasons for wanting to enter the UK. Unlike the previous extracts, this extract suggests that some asylum applicants were making 'false' claims and legitimises the idea that some asylum seekers are 'bogus'.

As argued by Phillips and Hardy (1997), the notion of the 'bogus' asylum seeker functions to justify the refugee status determination process, as this is the category of person that the system works to prevent from entering or remove from the host society. Here too the reference to people who were entering the UK for reasons other than asylum functions to legitimise the immigration system. In particular, stating the 'UK government had little choice' (ll. 2-3) can be heard as a defence of the government's actions and implies that the current asylum system is a result of the fraudulent actions of some asylum seekers.

This argument is marked as controversial by the interviewee hesitating and producing a statement that can be heard as a disclaimer: ‘I I I think people are always quite surprised to hear me say this’ (ll. 3-4). Suggesting that people are ‘surprised’ to hear his defence of the UK government implies that this argument is in some way contrary to his general role in relation to supporting asylum seekers and refugees. This functions in the same way as a counter disposition (Edwards, 2007), whereby the contrast suggests that the statement goes against the speaker’s general dispositions, and is therefore due to the facts of the world rather than simply a result of the speaker’s own subjective views. The need for an immigration policy is justified through the use of an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) whereby the alternative – ‘freedom of movement (1.0) across the world’ (l. 7) – is portrayed as ‘ridiculous’ (l. 7). In this regard, the government is made to appear reasonable and as being forced to respond in this way: ‘you had to have an immigration policy’ (ll. 4-5). Furthermore, the actions of the government are downplayed by describing it as having an ‘immigration policy’ (l. 5) rather than, for example, being specific about some of the aspects of the asylum process that were portrayed as restrictive or punitive in previous extracts.

This extract functions by separating out ‘people who (.) have arrived here for fear of persecution’ (ll. 12-13) from those who did not. This has been found in previous discursive research and functions to portray sympathy towards ‘genuine’ refugees while ultimately justifying a potentially harsh asylum system (Lynn & Lea, 2003). In this case, the interviewee presents himself as caring and empathetic by stating that ‘that makes me quite sad’ when discussing the way the system was ‘exploited’ (l. 11). Here the interviewee draws on concepts that are specifically related to the Geneva Convention definition of refugees in terms of a ‘well-grounded’ (l. 15) ‘fear of persecution’ (l. 13), and references a number of potentially persecuted groups: ‘because they were gay, because they follow a particular religion, whatever it might be’ (ll. 18-19). In this way, a specific definition of people who meet the appropriate criteria for refugee status is contrasted with a category of people who have entered the UK for reasons not relating to asylum. In this regard, the term ‘exploit’ / ‘exploited’ (ll. 10-12) implies that these people are using the asylum system for selfish reasons or to somehow benefit

themselves, similarly to the construction of the ‘standard story’ in extract one, rather than that they are using it for the purposes it was designed or because their lives are in danger. This allows the interviewee to criticise those who exploited the system for creating some of the negative views towards asylum seekers more generally, as all asylum seekers were said to have been ‘massed in’ with the ‘rhetoric about [...] economic migrants’ (ll. 21-22).

This extract is interesting for the way that it positions the speaker and other people and entities within the discourse, particularly as it appears to be critical of some asylum seekers yet comes from an interviewee whose job is to support asylum seekers. More specifically, the government is positioned as reasonable and as taking the only option available when it developed its immigration and asylum systems. Asylum seekers are broken into two groups: those who meet the criteria for refugee status and those who are entering the UK for reasons unrelated to asylum. In this way, those asylum seekers who are entering the country under false pretences are made accountable for both the UK’s strict asylum system and for some of the negative ‘rhetoric’ in response to asylum seekers. Moreover, moral judgements are attached to the different categories of asylum seekers, as the term ‘exploit’ works to criticise the actions of those who used the asylum system for ‘false’ purposes, whereas the ‘genuine’ refugees are positioned as deserving of empathy, as the interviewee says he is ‘sad’ about the negative effects on the system. The interviewee also carefully positions himself throughout this extract, as he makes reference to how his arguments may seem to go against his general disposition and the splitting of asylum seekers into two categories allows him to demonstrate empathy towards refugees while still holding other asylum seekers accountable for their actions.

Overall, the extracts in this section have illustrated a variety of ways in which the refugee status determination process can be criticised and one way in which it can be legitimised. The process was criticised on three slightly different grounds. In extract 28 it was described as having a ‘culture of disbelief’, which functioned to portray the flaws in the system as stretching across the organisation, which meant that it did not simply apply to some asylum seekers but rendered a number of refused asylum seekers as being potentially genuine refugees rather than ‘bogus’. Extract 29 involved a more

controversial claim in the sense that it accused the asylum system of being inherently racist, in terms of using a variety of unjust processes which were loaded against asylum seekers and therefore unfairly refused people who should have been given refugee status. Extract 30 provided a more specific and localised criticism in terms of suggesting that the system had particular problems with people from a certain country due to the context of that country, and therefore again it implied that some people from this country were being refused when their claims were actually genuine. Extract 31 was unusual in the sense that it illustrated how a professional interviewee actually justified the asylum system and criticised the actions of some asylum seekers who were purported to have used the asylum system to access the UK for reasons unrelated to asylum. Whereas the first three extracts undermined the identity category of ‘bogus asylum seekers’, the final extract worked to reinforce this position and suggested that these people were responsible both for the harsh asylum system and for some of the negative response from the local population. The next section of this chapter continues to analyse the ways in which discourse related to the asylum system creates a variety of subject positions and focuses in more detail on a different issue for people in the asylum process: the right for asylum seekers to work.

### **The right of asylum seekers to work**

Asylum seekers in Scotland bring with them a range of employment-related skills and qualifications, and tend to be well educated (Charlaff et al., 2004). However, the legislative barriers prevent them from using these skills in paid employment while awaiting a decision on their asylum claim (Da Lomba, 2010). In terms of explaining why asylum seekers are prevented from working, the UK Border Agency website states that: ‘This is because entering the country for economic reasons is not the same as seeking asylum, and it is important to maintain a distinction between the two’ (Home Office, n.d.). In this regard, Fekete (2001, p. 24) suggested that the UK Government has made ‘“deterrence’ (of ‘economic migrants’), not human rights (the protection of refugees), the guiding principle of its asylum policy’. Mulvey (2010) argued that this

policy was based on the unsupported assumption that the right for asylum seekers to work functions as a 'pull factor' for attracting false asylum claims. It therefore appears that the removal of the right for asylum seekers to work is based on the idea of the 'economic migrant' or 'bogus asylum seeker' who uses the asylum system to enter the UK in order to work, rather than because they are being persecuted, despite the lack of evidence to back up this argument.

However, this policy may have a range of negative effects on asylum seekers while they await the outcome of their claims, some of which may carry on once the asylum applicants have been given leave to remain in the UK. In particular, this can lead to a loss of skills, increasing reliance on the benefit system, greater isolation in society and more difficulty accessing appropriate employment at a later stage (Mulvey, 2010; Da Lomba, 2010; Smyth & Kum, 2010). Moreover, this enforced reliance on the benefit system reinforces the discursive construction of asylum seekers as a drain on society (Lynn & Lea, 2003). Leudar et al. (2008, p. 212) illustrated that the resulting 'enforced idleness' may then be taken to be an inherent part of their nature, so that they are blamed for a situation that is a result of the asylum system rather than their individual choices, and may lead to greater antagonism towards asylum seekers in the host society. This policy therefore appears to have a range of negative effects that are both material and discursive and is therefore worthy of exploration in terms of the discursive constructions and subject positions that are involved.

For these reasons, this section involves analysis of interview extracts relating to the issue of asylum seekers' right to work. This topic was particularly prominent within the interviews with professionals, but was also evident in the interviews with asylum seekers and refugees. Some of the Scottish locals also raised the issue, although some discussed it only after prompting, and some were unaware that asylum seekers were prevented from working. Extracts were selected from across the interviewees in order to illustrate a range of responses from different positions. This first extract is from an interview with a refugee who discussed the problems with this policy in detail; the extract is from the beginning of the interview, during which the interviewee gave



background information about himself and outlined some of the problems he had in the UK.

*Extract 32: Refugee 5*

- 1 R5 I am uh (1.0) about twenty five years (1.0) I was graduated from university  
2 SK right  
3 R5 I have a masters degree in ((subject area))=  
4 SK =right okay yeah  
5 R5 (0.6) and the (2.0) the big problem for me (1.0) was I couldn't work (.) you know  
6 (1.0) because Home Office (.) they didn't permit (0.5) any permission to me (.) for  
7 working  
8 SK sure yeah  
9 R5 and (0.8) I told them (0.6) I'm ready (.) even working with- for you as a volunteer (.)  
10 because I have (0.6) good (0.6) experience  
11 SK yeah  
12 R5 in ((subject area))  
13 SK sure  
14 R5 more than thirty years  
15 SK yeah  
16 R5 (1.0) but (0.6) even some- somewhere could find (.) a job (.) but quickly after one  
17 week they called me ((interviewee name)) sorry (0.8) because Home- Home Office  
18 says (.) you cannot work  
19 SK right  
20 R5 volunteer working you know  
21 SK yeah  
22 R5 (1.6) I don't know (1.6) this is their problem (1.5) they should think about their  
23 country, not me

In this extract, the interviewee constructs himself as having a large amount of work-related qualifications and experience, emphasised through references to the length of time in years: 'about twenty five years' (l. 1) and 'more than thirty years' (l. 14). This

means that when he highlights his 'big problem' (l. 5) as not being able to work, the source of the problem is placed with the 'Home Office' (l. 6), for not permitting him to work, rather than, for example, his own lack of experience and skills. Moreover, the interviewee portrays himself as 'ready' to work even 'as a volunteer' (l. 9). He therefore presents himself as willing and able to work and suggests that his motivations for work are not related to money. This construction seems to contradict more antagonistic discursive constructions that portray asylum seekers as being a drain on society and / or as coming into the host society for economic reasons (Lynn & Lea, 2003).

The extract goes on to reinforce this construction of the asylum seeker as active and the Home Office as being part of the problem. Specifically, the interviewee states that even when he did find a job the experience would be cut short due to the interventions of the Home Office (ll. 16-18). Moreover, while he initially describes the problem as 'his' – 'the big problem for me (1.0) was I couldn't work' (l. 5) – towards the end of the extract he suggests that the problem belongs to the Home Office: 'this is their problem' (l. 22). Given the narrative of having skills, qualifications and experience, and identifying appropriate jobs in the UK, the Home Office is explicitly positioned as being responsible for the negative outcome. Importantly, the interviewee implies that the Home Office is therefore creating a situation that runs counter to the national interests: 'they should think about their country, not me' (ll. 22-23). Portraying the right of asylum seekers to work as being in the national interest works both to criticise the actions of the Home Office and to present the interviewee's desire to work as being something that everyone in the country should support, rather than simply being in the interests of him as an individual. In this way, the interviewee positions himself as concerned about the interests of the UK whereas the Home Office is positioned as working against these interests.

At this point it is worth noting that the hostile themes of asylum seekers being a drain on society and as entering the UK for economic reasons rather than because they are persecuted (Leudar et al., 2008) are contradictory in such a way that they position asylum seekers negatively regardless of their situation. That is, those who are reliant on benefits are positioned as a drain on society while those who work are potentially

positioned as economic migrants rather than ‘genuine refugees’. This extract illustrates how a refugee may counter these constructions by positioning himself as skilled, qualified, experienced and actively seeking work, and therefore not as a ‘drain’ on society, while also positioning himself as willing to work voluntarily, and therefore not in the UK for economic reasons. Moreover, drawing on the interests of the nation (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001) works to criticise the policy of preventing asylum seekers from working and shift the focus off the wishes of individual asylum seekers and onto the needs of the country as a whole. In this way, the interviewee attempts to counter the ‘enforced idleness’ of asylum seekers (Leudar et al., 2008).

The next extract is from a professional and further addresses the negative consequences of preventing asylum seekers from working and specifically deals with the issue of ‘economic migrants’. The extract forms part of the interviewee’s response about the issues that asylum seekers and refugees find most difficult and constitutes an explanation for the social isolation that he suggests many asylum seekers experience.

*Extract 33: Professional 4*

- 1 P4 the isolation comes from not having any ability t- t- (.) they have no (1.0) ability to
- 2 work
- 3 SK right
- 4 P4 (0.8) you know and that (0.8) is often a major factor
- 5 SK mm-hmm
- 6 P4 (.) in (.) in people being excluded from their own communities
- 7 SK mmm
- 8 P4 (1.0) because as we both know immigrant communities (.) tend to be the ones who
- 9 (4.0) are are l- are almost less likely to be unemployed
- 10 SK right=
- 11 P4 =less likely to accept unemployment as a (.) as a as a state of (.) being
- 12 SK sure
- 13 P4 y- y- ya know (.) um (0.5) th- th- (1.0) in my experience certainly (.) and (2.0) this

14            isn't supposed to be political comment uh (.) because people (.) of course I don't  
 15            want a (.) th- th- the political bit being that (.) you know (.) straying into uh defining  
 16            people as economic migrants or asylum=  
 17    SK    =I see  
 18    P4    claimants (1.5) irrespective (.) of whether they are an asylum claimant (.) the  
 19            individual (.) wants to be able to work  
 20    SK    right sure  
 21    P4    okay now of course there are legis- legislative barriers  
 22    SK    yeah  
 23    P4    to that (1.5) which obviously doesn't deter some people, they will work anyway  
 24    SK    right  
 25    P4    illegally  
 26    SK    heh hhh  
 27    P4    um we shouldn't be heh heh heh heh we shouldn't be naïve about the extent to  
 28            which people work  
 29    SK    yep  
 30    P4    um again th- that doesn't- (1.0) that shouldn't (.) whether somebody works or not  
 31            should not prejudice (.) their asylum claim if they're caught working because (.) it  
 32            doesn't mean to say they still don't have a valid (.) claim for asylum

In this extract, the interviewee gives an account of why asylum seekers and refugees often experience 'isolation' (l. 1). Specifically, the interviewee suggests that a 'major factor' (l. 4) in this isolation is that asylum seekers 'have no (1.0) ability to work' (ll. 1-2). As with the previous extract, the prevention of asylum seekers from working is portrayed as a problem. Furthermore, the argument that this results in 'people being excluded from their own communities' (l. 6) can be heard as a criticism as it is implied that people should be a natural part of communities that are their 'own'. In lines 8-11, the interviewee presents a form of shared knowledge – 'as we both know' (l. 8) – implicitly referencing the fact that neither the interviewer nor the interviewee is from Scotland. He then initially constructs immigrants as 'almost less likely to be unemployed' (l. 9) and then alters this to 'less likely to accept unemployment as a [...]

state of (.) being' (l. 11). This shift deals with the issue that almost all asylum seekers in the UK are likely to be unemployed due to legal barriers to paid unemployment; instead the interviewee presents them as being unwilling to accept this positioning, rather than being actually less likely to be unemployed. In this way asylum seekers, as a category of immigrant, are positioned as being essentially opposed to unemployment. As with the previous extract, this construction works against those discourses that portray asylum seekers as being a drain on the host society.

In lines 13-16, the interviewee highlights that there are potentially political implications of his comments. Specifically, he identifies the political aspects being 'straying into uh defining people as economic migrants or asylum [...] claimants' (ll. 15-18). This touches on the distinction made by Zetter (2007) that such labels are used as non-political bureaucratic categories within the asylum system itself yet are politicised within public discourse. More specifically, Phillips and Hardy (1997) suggested that governments have an interest in perpetuating the idea that many asylum seekers are in fact 'economic migrants in disguise', as this legitimises strict border controls on the basis of deterring 'bogus' asylum seekers. The interviewee could be seen as orienting to the way in which his previous comments potentially imply that all asylum seekers are in fact economic migrants, as they have a drive to work. This repair is signalled by the hesitations and repetitions in this part of the extract, for example: 'y- y- ya know (.) um (0.5) th- th- (1.0) [...] of course I don't want a (.) th- th- the' (ll. 13-15).

The interviewee then deconstructs this binary opposition between asylum seekers and economic migrants by explaining that 'irrespective (.) of whether they are an asylum claimant (.) the individual (.) wants to be able to work' (ll. 18-19). This usefully deals with the politically charged nature of the issue by separating immigrants' inherent drive to work from the grounds on which people seek to remain in the UK. This addresses the more hostile discourse whereby asylum seekers are portrayed as either a drain on society or as 'economic migrants in disguise' (Leudar et al., 2008; Lynn & Lea, 2003). The interviewee then goes on to mention the 'legislative barriers' (l. 21) to asylum seekers working. Interestingly, he suggests that some asylum seekers will ignore these barriers and 'work anyway [...] illegally' (ll. 23-25). While the portrayal of asylum seekers as

potentially criminal could be seen as antagonistic and as legitimising their harsh treatment (Malloch & Stanley, 2005), the interviewee rather treats this as simply being realistic about the situation: ‘we shouldn’t be naïve about the extent to which people work’ (ll. 27-28). Moreover, he separates out the issue of someone working illegally from the validity of their asylum claim, so that the illegal act is not presented as defining the person as ‘criminal’ and therefore undeserving or ineligible for asylum (ll. 30-32). In this way, the interviewee addresses the issues of ‘economic migrant’, asylum seeker and illegal behaviour by carefully distinguishing them in particular ways that position asylum seekers as driven to work without necessarily being economic migrants and separating out any illegal acts from the validity of their asylum claims.

This extract therefore portrays the prevention of asylum seekers from working as being a problem, specifically in relation to their integration. Moreover, he does this through constructing asylum seekers as having a natural desire to work but separating out this natural desire from people’s actual intentions regarding entry to the host society. Furthermore, the distinction between the validity of an asylum claim is separated from any illegal activities in the host society so as to distinguish between someone committing an offence and having a legitimate claim for asylum. Overall then this counters the way the asylum system, and related discourse, positions asylum seekers as idle or a drain on the host society, as potential economic migrants or as being criminal if they work illegally, and instead suggests that they are naturally inclined to work and should not be demonised for this.

The next short extract, from an interview with a Scottish local, specifically addresses this issue in the context of public discourse that portrays asylum seekers as a drain on the host society. The extract follows the interviewee stating that asylum seekers are unable to work.

*Extract 34: Local 3*

1 SK and what are your views on that, the um fact asylum seekers are not able to work?

- 2 L3 (.) I think it's wrong, they should be contributing to the system (1.2) it would stop a  
3 lot of (0.5) people saying that they're spongers  
4 SK right  
5 L3 contri- allow them to contribute something (.)  
6 SK yeah  
7 L3 then they're paying taxes and (1.0)  
8 SK yeah

Whereas some of the previous extracts argued that asylum seekers should be able to work on the grounds that preventing them working is damaging for them or is not in the national interests, this extract develops its argument in a slightly different way. It begins with the same negative evaluation of this policy – ‘it’s wrong’ (l. 2) – but then focuses on what asylum seekers ‘should’ (l. 2) be doing, not in terms of benefits to themselves, but rather through contributions to ‘the system’ (l. 2). This is then presented as being important for preventing negative attitudes from members of the local community: ‘it would stop a lot of (0.5) people saying that they’re spongers’ (l. 3). Importantly, allowing asylum seekers to ‘contribute’ would allow them to move positions, in the alleged views of other people, from being seen as ‘spongers’ to being ‘contributors’. As identified by Leudar et al. (2008), it is the negative positioning of asylum seekers as ‘idle’, due to being prevented from working, that may reinforce hostile responses from the public. Importantly, the interviewee states that then the asylum seekers would be ‘paying taxes’ (l. 7), which would position asylum seekers as earning their right to be in the UK and as benefiting the wider society. This extract therefore illustrates how construing the situation in this way works to portray asylum seekers’ right to work as a benefit both in terms of positioning them more positively and countering negative views.

The next extract also argues in favour of allowing asylum seekers to work but does so in a very different way. That is, the interviewee, who is a refugee, makes reference to some people ‘abusing’ the asylum system. This extract is in response to a question about what could be done to better help asylum seekers and refugees.

*Extract 35: Refugee 1*

- 1 R1 in my opinion (1.0) they have to give the chance to people (1.0) to start doing their  
2 work in here (.)
- 3 SK okay
- 4 R1 u:h (1.0) they give them the opportunity to get their work permit (1.0) and then (0.8)  
5 they give them the places to work
- 6 SK right
- 7 R1 and they will started you know to see the people how they (0.8) uh how can I say  
8 they (0.8) behave (1.0) themselves like that
- 9 SK right
- 10 R1 if (0.5) there is some people they don't want you know to work (.) just why you are  
11 living here? just get back
- 12 SK okay
- 13 R1 (1.2) because you know that it's not fair to live you know without do anything for  
14 example I will tell you there is some people they are abuse of the system
- 15 SK okay
- 16 R1 (1.0) they try to abuse of the system (.) we know (0.8) u:h that (0.8) we can do  
17 something, we can do something (0.8) we try (1.2) do your best you know to do to  
18 give something (1.6) uh even if you can't you know for example it's you know you  
19 are not disabled, if you are not disabled why you not
- 20 SK mm-hmm (.) right
- 21 R1 (0.8) to do something?
- 22 SK mm-hmm
- 23 R1 (1.0) you have to understand you know these people here they are working hard (1.0)  
24 to build their country
- 25 SK mm-hmm
- 26 R1 (1.2) and to get things you know they have to do a lot of things you know=  
27 SK =mm-hmm
- 28 R1 to get these thing
- 29 SK right
- 30 R1 so for that reason for us it will be the same



- 31 SK mm-hmm  
32 R1 we have to do the same things  
33 SK right  
34 R1 if you got the right to work just go and work

As with the previous extracts in this section, this extract involves the interviewee stating that asylum seekers should be given ‘the chance [...] to start doing their work’ (ll. 1-2). The interviewee goes on to explain that then ‘they’ will be able to ‘see’ how people ‘behave’ (ll. 7-8). Although ambiguous, the statement suggests that in allowing asylum seekers to work, asylum seekers will be found to ‘behave themselves’ by working well and / or the way that asylum seekers behave will reveal useful information about their disposition. Here the following statement is of particular interest: ‘if (0.5) there is some people they don't want you know to work just why you are living here? just get back’ (ll. 10-11). This is interesting because very similar statements were made in other interviews but presented as reported speech attributed to *locals* who had negative views of asylum seekers (e.g., extract 19). As with the other examples, the rhetorical question contains two elements that are somewhat in tension: it both suggests that there is no good reason for the person being in the country and that the speaker does not have knowledge of the reasons for them being in the country. Whereas when this is stated as being the voice of a local person the implication is that they are not aware of the persecution that asylum seekers are forced to flee or the legal and moral obligations of the UK to provide asylum, here when voiced by an asylum seeker this aspect would seem to be absent as an asylum seeker would be assumed to have an understanding of these issues. The use of the rhetorical question therefore suggests that persecution in itself is not a good enough reason for someone to be in the UK claiming asylum, but rather they need also to be contributing to society through work.

The statement ‘just get back’ (l. 11) suggests that asylum seekers can easily return (‘just’ return), which similarly ignores the reasons for them having to flee in the first place. However, whereas this type of reported speech can be heard as a form of racism or ignorance when associated with local people, when voiced by an asylum seeker this

takes on a slightly different role: it suggests a hard line on those who are unwilling to contribute to the UK, implying that the speaker places importance on this form of contribution while also making a strong case for allowing asylum seekers to work, as it would purportedly bring attention to those asylum seekers who are unwilling to contribute and can therefore be assumed to be in the country illegitimately. However it also implies that the right to asylum includes a requirement for people to contribute to the host society.

The interviewee goes on to provide further explanation for her position. Her argument draws on the concept of fairness: 'it's not fair to live you know without do anything' (l. 13). This construction implies that there is a transactional element to the provision of asylum: if someone gets asylum then they must also contribute to the country of asylum. This is interesting as this is an argument in favour of the rights of asylum seekers (i.e., the right to work) but it draws on individualistic notions of contribution and payback rather than broader notions of international legal and moral obligations. The interviewee continues to make her case by highlighting that some people 'abuse [...] the system' (l. 14). Whereas this could be heard as bringing attention to fraudulent cases in order to justify tighter restrictions within the asylum system, here it functions to bolster the interviewee's own case – i.e., she is legitimate whereas others may be illegitimate – and functions to justify increasing the rights of asylum seekers.

As with extract 32, the argument draws on notions of the national interest: 'you have to understand you know these people here they are working hard (1.0) to build their country' (ll. 23-24) and 'we have to do the same things' (l. 32). Similar to the previous extract, which drew on the notion of 'contributing', here the extract suggests that asylum seekers need to act like other members of the nation by 'working hard' and should therefore be allowed to work. Again the interviewee uses the word 'just' to suggest that something is easy to do: 'if you got the right to work just go and work' (l. 34). Together, then, the argument works by suggesting that asylum seekers should be working, that it is easy to access work, that asylum seekers who do not work should not be in the UK, and therefore that the Home Office should allow asylum seekers to work, particularly because this will draw attention to those who are using the asylum system in a fraudulent

manner. Unlike extract 33, whereby working was clearly separated from the validity of someone's asylum claim, here the two are closely linked so that those who do not work are positioned as not belonging in the UK. This extract is particularly interesting because it draws on notions that are often used to argue against the presence of asylum seekers and refugees (e.g., Lynn & Lea, 2003) but in this case argues for the extension of asylum seeker rights.

It is also worth considering the relationship between the constructions evident in extracts 34 and 35 and the arguments supporting the presence of asylum seekers and refugees based on the benefits they bring to the host society (chapter one, section two). In the earlier chapter, asylum seekers' countries of origin were portrayed as providing asylum seekers with various characteristics (such as being hardworking) that legitimised their presence in the host society through the benefits that they bring. The extracts in this section illustrate the other side of the coin in the sense that not working constitutes asylum seekers in negative ways – as 'spongers' (extract 34) or people who abuse the system (extract 35) – that delegitimise their presence. In extract 35, this specifically works by constructing the host society as being a place where people 'are working hard' (l. 23), so that people who do not work hard are construed as not belonging in the country. In this way, notions of place-identity (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005) can be seen to regulate both who belongs in a place and the sorts of policies to which people should be subjected.

In contrast to the previous extracts in this section, the following extract, from an interview with a Scottish local, suggests that asylum seekers should not be allowed to work. This extract comes after the interviewee had been stating that it was difficult for people to access paid employment in the local area and acknowledged that asylum seekers are not allowed to work.

*Extract 36: Local 8*

1 SK I was just wondering if um you had any views on that (1.9) like the fact that they're

2 not like allowed to work (.) um (0.8) before they've (.) had their claim determined  
3 L8 (1.9) I personally feel as if (0.8) just (.) with the current climate it's probably the right  
4 way to go  
5 SK okay  
6 L8 I do think with the fact that with the way things are jobs are so scarce (0.9) places I  
7 mean I was (0.6) laid off twice in two years (0.6) because of companies have folded  
8 (0.7) so (0.5) I do think (0.8) I would be extremely upset (0.7) if someone that didn't  
9 come from the country  
10 SK mmm  
11 L8 (.) walked into a job that I could've had  
12 SK ah I see=  
13 L8 =you know I I as I so I do feel (0.8) unless their (0.8) asylum's been (1.1) granted  
14 SK mm-hmm  
15 L8 (0.6) then (0.6) no they should wait it out (0.7) maybe do voluntary, integrate  
16 themselves, let people know that they're there and  
17 SK mm-hmm  
18 L8 what they can do  
19 SK okay  
20 L8 what they can do and I do feel that voluntary is (0.7) possibly the best way for them  
21 to go

Unlike most other interviews, in this extract the interviewee stated that disallowing asylum seekers from working is 'probably the right way to go' (ll. 3-4). Importantly, she placed this within a specific context – 'the current climate' (l. 3) – which can be heard as implicitly referencing the current economic or employment climate and is made more specific when she says 'the way things are jobs are so scarce' (l. 6). In a similar way to those Scottish locals who argued against the presence of asylum seekers in extracts 10 and 11, tempering the argument in this way works to present it as more reasoned; it is not simply the case that asylum seekers should never be allowed to work, but rather it is external factors that make this the best course of action at the moment.

The case for this argument was further built up by drawing on the interviewee's personal experiences – 'I was laid off twice in two years' (l. 7) – which is hearable both as a negative experience for the interviewee and as a reflection of an unfavourable job market. The personal reference works to make the argument more sympathetic as the interviewee then suggests they would be 'extremely upset (0.7) if someone that didn't come from the country [...] walked into a job that I could've had' (ll. 8-11). The stated emotions suggest that the outcome would be hurtful and therefore unfair in some way. Furthermore, similar to some previous extracts (e.g., extracts 14 and 17), embedded in this line of talk is the implication that jobs are tied to place in such a way that nationals of a country have a right to jobs whereas people from other countries do not have the same claim to these jobs. Moreover, describing it as 'walked into a job' (l. 11) suggests that they would be able to gain the job with virtually no effort, therefore suggesting that the person had not 'earned' it and thus it was not rightfully theirs.

In place of paid employment, the interviewee presents a form of list in terms of the activities asylum seekers 'should' get involved in (ll. 15-18). This includes voluntary work, integrating themselves, letting people know they're there and what they can do. Listing in this way gives the impression that there are a range of activities that asylum seekers could get involved in; this is in contrast to the constructions in extract 35, whereby not working was equated with 'doing nothing'. Presenting the situation in this way suggests that asylum seekers can still be active even if not in paid employment and presents this period as a reasonable lead-in to paid employment.

Overall then this extract illustrates how the policy of preventing asylum seekers from working can be supported through drawing on a context of an unfavourable employment environment, implying that jobs are naturally associated with members of a nation in a way that suggests people coming in from other countries gain jobs 'unfairly' and by presenting the 'waiting period' as consisting of opportunities to prepare oneself for the employment market and otherwise engage in society. Those who would otherwise access paid employment are positioned as acting 'unfairly' and potentially leading to antagonism from the host society.

The final extract in this section is taken from the interview with Professional 4, from whose interview extract 33 was taken. This extract has been chosen as it offers an interesting contrast to the previous extract from the same interviewee and illustrates one of the rare examples whereby someone who worked with asylum seekers and refugees argued that asylum seekers should not be given permission to work.

*Extract 37: Professional 4*

- 1 SK what do you think um could be done to better help asylum seekers and refugees in  
2 Scotland?
- 3 P4 (8.0) you see this is a difficult issue and I know of course th- th- top on top on the list  
4 for debate is permission to work
- 5 SK right sure
- 6 P4 (1.0) but then if you (1.5) if you provide asylum seekers (1.5) with permission to  
7 work (.) you then open the door again to economic migrancy
- 8 SK okay
- 9 P4 and the abuse of the system
- 10 SK sure
- 11 P4 (.) and that's always been the argument
- 12 SK yeah
- 13 P4 and I I there's a (.) and I support (.) I sorta support that argument (1.0) it's it's a, it's a  
14 DIFFICULT one
- 15 SK yeah
- 16 P4 because I've seen how as I've said before because I've seen how (.) the impact on  
17 people who ↑I (2.0) sorta know are genuine- people who're genuinely fled (1.5)  
18 horrific circumstances
- 19 SK yeah
- 20 P4 (2.0) and and the impact that it's had on on those people (.) the the whole abuse of (.)  
21 the system for economic migrancy reasons

When asked about what could be done to better help asylum seekers and refugees, the interviewee suggested that permission for asylum seekers to work is ‘top on the list for debate’ (ll. 3-4). This form of expression highlights that this is a potential way of helping asylum seekers, but by portraying it as an issue for ‘debate’ he avoids giving it unmitigated support. He presents his arguments as balanced by weighing the potential immediate benefits to asylum seekers against the potential abuse of the system this may allow (ll. 6-7). In particular, this is presented as potentially being responsible for greater ‘economic migrancy’ (l. 7), which is hearable as undesirable and equated or associated with ‘abuse of the system’ (l. 9). In this way, the prevention of ‘abuse of the system’ is portrayed as a reasonable rationale for limiting the rights of all asylum seekers; arguments along these lines have also been identified in political discourse (Goodman & Speer, 2007).

In line 11, the interviewee uses a form of footing (Goffman, 1981), as he says ‘and that’s always been the argument’, which allows him to distance himself from this argument to some extent and provide only partial agreement: ‘I sorta support that argument’ (l. 13). The interview highlights the complexity of weighing up the benefits with the problems, describing this as a ‘difficult issue’ (l. 3) and a ‘DIFFICULT one’ (l. 14), which functions as a way of putting off a commitment to either side of this ‘issue’. Ultimately he is able to withhold his full support for providing permission to work due to the negative consequences that he has ‘seen’ (l. 16) this have on people who he believes have fled persecution. In this case, the category of people who ‘abuse’ (l. 20) the asylum system is a category of person who poses a threat to the UK as well as to genuine refugees, and unintended harm to asylum seekers may be justified by the need to ensure that economic migrants do not enter the country under false asylum claims. As with the same interviewee’s extract in the previous section (extract 31), here the interviewee manages his position in part by displaying empathy for ‘people who’re genuinely fled (1.5) horrific circumstances’ (ll. 17-18), and it is this separation between those who are ‘genuine’ and those who enter the UK for the purposes of ‘economic migrancy’ that helps to legitimise the restriction of all asylum seekers’ access to paid employment.

The analyses in this section illustrated a range of ways in which interviewees could argue for or against the right of asylum seekers to work. In particular, arguments in favour of asylum seekers' right to work constructed asylum seekers as skilled and willing to work whereas the Home Office was constructed as being a problem. Some of these extracts carefully managed issues around the construction of asylum seekers as potential economic migrants; for instance, a refugee interviewee managed this by constructed himself as willing to work without pay and a professional interviewee distinguished between a person's reasons for entering the UK and immigrants' general disposition towards working. The right to work was also justified in terms of the potential benefits to the country, its ability to counter isolation and its potential to alter the negative perceptions of asylum seekers as 'spongers'. Arguments against the right to work either drew on the notion that jobs belonged to people of a particular country, and therefore asylum seekers had no right to them, or that allowing asylum seekers to work would encourage 'economic migrants' to enter the UK through the asylum system. These constructions have consequences in terms of the way asylum seekers are discursively positioned – for instance, as skilled or as potential frauds – that may function not only to justify particular policies within the asylum system, but also to reinforce or challenge negative views amongst the public. The next section builds on these analyses by focusing on some particularly harsh and traumatic aspects of the asylum system: destitution, detention and deportation.

### **Destitution, detention and deportation**

Asylum seekers face the constant threat of having their claims for asylum refused, in which case they may have their support ended and become destitute, or be detained or deported. These issues are closely related; for instance, people whose asylum claims have been refused and have been become destitute must agree to 'voluntary return' in order to access a form of 'cashless' support known as 'Section Four' (Green, 2006). Obviously the notion that this is 'voluntary' is undermined by the lack of choices that people in this situation must face. However, the former Minister of State for Borders and



Immigration, Phil Woolas, stated: 'I reject any proposition which says that the Government uses destitution as an instrument of policy' (Refugee Council, 2009, p. 8). Despite this statement, the policy seems designed to function in such a way to encourage people who have had their asylum claims refused to agree to return to their countries of origin in order to address the issues associated with destitution. Therefore the way in which such policies are justified will have discursive effects in terms of positioning asylum seekers as well as material effects in terms of their access to support.

Similarly, the way asylum seekers are constructed may function to justify the use of detention and deportation. In particular, constructing asylum seekers as 'criminal' may justify the use of detention centres (Malloch & Stanley, 2005). Moreover, the use of detention may function to reinforce the perception that asylum seekers are criminal and do not belong in the host society. Therefore the discursive constructions and material circumstances may work together to exclude asylum seekers, both in terms of their social position in the host society and in terms of actually removing them from the host country altogether. This section therefore builds upon the previous sections in this chapter to explore how interviewee discourse constructed these issues, particularly in terms of challenging some of the more exclusionary policies and practices. The interviewees generally talked about these issues in a critical way, therefore the extracts have been selected in order to provide a range of constructions of these issues, generally aimed at changing and improving the policies and the associated positions of asylum seekers.

The first extract directly relates to the statement by the former Minister of State for Borders and Immigration. The extract comes during a section of the interview in which the interviewee was highlighting issues that need to be addressed in relation to asylum seekers and refugees.

*Extract 38: Professional 13*

1 P13 I think ↓destitution: (1.0) you know is a key thing, not using destitution as a tool

2 SK right  
 3 P13 to try and get people to comply with the immigration system [you know]  
 4 SK [right]  
 5 P13 (1.5) from our perspective it's extremely inhumane=  
 6 SK =mm-hmm=  
 7 P13 =and from theirs it just doesn't work

This extract begins with the interviewee naming 'destitution' (l. 1) as an issue that should be addressed. The interviewee goes on to argue against 'destitution as a tool [...] to try and get people to comply with the immigration system' (ll. 1-3). This is very similar to the construction mentioned above that the Minister rejected; specifically, 'destitution as an instrument of policy' (Refugee Council, 2009, p. 8). The notion of destitution, whereby someone is without food or shelter, is hearably a negative state, so that the implication that this is being used as a 'tool' or 'instrument' by the government functions to criticise this policy as being somewhat unethical.

The critique of this policy is further worked up through the presentation of two different perspectives. Firstly, the interviewee portrays the policy as inappropriate from the perspective of the voluntary organisation: 'from our perspective it's extremely inhumane' (l. 5). This presents the organisation as concerned about the *means* of the policy and suggests that it fails to meet certain ethical conditions related to the treatment of any people. Secondly, the interviewee suggests the policy is also inappropriate from the point of view of the Home Office: 'and from theirs it just doesn't work' (l. 7). This presents the Home Office as being concerned about the *ends* of the policy and therefore the policy is criticised for not meeting their objectives. This also positions the organisations slightly differently, as the voluntary organisation is positioned as concerned about the asylum seekers as people whereas the Home Office is positioned as concerned about asylum seekers to the extent that it allows them to meet certain policy objectives. The construction therefore works by drawing on a combination of humanitarian and utilitarian discourse. Moreover, these different discourses imply

different positionings of asylum seekers, either as people with humanity or as objects of policy interventions.

The next extract similarly focuses on the issue of Section Four support and destitution, making a more explicit case regarding the negative effects of this policy. The extract is in response to a question about what could be done to better help asylum seekers and refugees.

*Extract 39: Professional 15*

- 1 P15 I think the system of Section Four support (.) for people, this voucher only  
2 accommodation, this cashless support (0.5) thirty five pounds per week  
3 SK mmm  
4 P15 um (.) I think it's grossly (1.0) unfair and it really (.) makes people (.) live at a level  
5 where they can- they can't hope in any way to integrate (0.8) to society or lead their  
6 lives with dignity at all

In this extract, the interviewee portrays the use of Section Four support as 'grossly (1.0) unfair' (l. 4). As with the previous extract, this draws on notions related to the ethical treatment of people in order to criticise the policy. The interviewee goes on to argue that the policy means that people 'can't hope in any way to integrate (0.8) to society or lead their lives with dignity at all' (ll. 5-6). As illustrated in the previous chapter, integration is generally taken to be something that is desirable, therefore portraying something as preventing integration functions as a criticism. Moreover, the references to 'dignity' (l. 6) draw on a form of humanitarian discourse (Every, 2008), suggesting that the policy is in some way inhumane, in a similar way to the previous extract. Therefore, as with the previous extract, this extract focuses on both the processes and the outcomes in order to criticise the policy of Section Four support. This discourse implies that the policy positions people as being objects of the asylum policy and as lacking the rights generally afforded to humans, and works up a challenge to this through asserting their right to dignity.

The following extract is from an asylum seeker and also relates to the issue of destitution. The extract is in response to a question about what could be done to better help asylum seekers and refugees.

*Extract 40: Refugee 7*

- 1 R7 I have this couple of friends here (1.2) when they've stopped their support (0.6) they  
2 don't have nowhere to run to  
3 SK right okay  
4 R7 (0.8) so (2.2) I want that to be changed (.) if someone uh (0.8) if uh (0.8) uh if  
5 someone is still in the country, they have not deported him  
6 SK mmm  
7 R7 (0.6) at least the support should continue  
8 SK yeah sure mmm=  
9 =yeah because you find some others (.) like I met some guys (2.0) they would get  
10 into a bin you know (2.7) so (0.8) that's what I hhh that's what I think  
11 SK right okay (.) so (0.8) yeah so to continue support  
12 R7 es- especially those who are on Section Four yeah  
13 SK right yeah  
14 R7 it s- (0.8) it scares you  
15 SK yeah  
16 R7 mmm  
17 SK okay yeah so some of your friends have been on Section [Four support yeah]  
18 R7 [yeah yeah]  
19 SK aha  
20 R7 and their support has been stopped  
21 SK mm-hmm  
22 R7 (1.2) right now they have don't have nowhere to turn to (.) they resort to begging  
23 SK right yeah  
24 R7 they resort to begging

Towards the beginning of the extract the interviewee states that the end of someone's support has the result that 'they don't have nowhere to run to' (ll. 1-2). This highlights the plight of these asylum seekers through the use of the extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986); the implication is that they have no other options but to be supported by the Home Office and therefore there is a moral obligation for them to do so. The interviewee outlines his argument in the following way: 'if someone is still in the country, they have not deported him [...] at least the support should continue' (ll. 4-7). The implication here is that someone should not be left without any means to support themselves if they are living in the host society. The potential consequences of destitution are illustrated by the interviewee stating: 'I met some guys (2.0) they would get into a bin you know' (ll. 9-10). In this case, the image of people getting into a 'bin' – perhaps for food or shelter – works to criticise this policy. In particular, this is hearably a bad experience and one that should not be created by governmental policy, as is implied by the interviewee. In this way the interviewee highlights the responsibility for the government in preventing people from being destitute.

The problematic nature of this situation is further emphasised by the interviewee stating 'it scares you' (l. 14). This portrays the situation as not only inhumane but also as frightening; the statement has particular resonance given that the speaker is an asylum seekers who could end up in the same situation. The interviewee's characterisation of the situation is emphasised by the repetition of 'they have don't have nowhere to turn to' (l. 22). Moreover, stating that 'they resort to begging' (l. 22) both highlights how the situation is inhumane – in a similar way to the references of people getting into 'bins' – while also implying that the government has some responsibility, as they 'resort' to this behaviour given no other options. So although the people the interviewee refers to are positioned as being without means and relying on particularly undesirable tactics to survive, the responsibility is ultimately placed with the government for not continuing to support them, given that they are still in the UK.

The extracts relating to destitution therefore highlight the culpability of the government in terms of either purposively making people destitute in order to encourage them to leave the country or through a form of neglect. In these cases, the speakers

emphasise issues of dignity and humanity in order to criticise the policies around destitution and at times present the Home Office as neglecting to treat asylum seekers as people, and rather position them as objects of policy.

The following extracts illustrate how similar constructions are used to criticise the policy of using detention. These two extracts draw on notions of family and children in order to criticise the use of detention. They come from different points in the interview with one professional; the first extract is in response to a question about the difficulties faced by asylum seekers and refugees and the second extract comes towards the end of a long discussion about issues relating to accommodation.

*Extract 41: Professional 1*

- 1 P1 the other issue that came out is obviously ch- children being detained (0.6) em for us  
2 is just something that should should never happen (0.6) em (.) I don't (0.8) believe  
3 that (0.8) kids and (.) like babies or that should be (2.5) I dunno sorta punished  
4 because decisions that (0.8) that their their parents have made (0.6) em (0.8) or just  
5 because of the situation that (.) they were born (.) into that, it wasnae a decision that  
6 they made to leave the country or they could've done things differently

*Extract 42: Professional 1*

- 1 P1 you've got prisons for for criminals, you've got detention centres for for who?  
2 families? and (.) for people who (.) shouldnae be detained in the first place

The arguments in extracts 41 and 42 criticise the use of detention through constructing the subjects of its use in particular ways. Specifically, they are constructed as 'kids' and 'babies' (extract 41, l. 3) and as 'families' (extract 42, l. 2). As illustrated in the first empirical chapter of this thesis, constructing asylum seekers as 'families' presents them as having particularly good qualities and serves to support actions that are in their favour. In this regard, Goodman (2007) illustrated how damaging aspects of the asylum

system could be criticised through construing the subjects of the policies using informal terms, such as ‘kids’, which serve to normalise them, and through portraying them as ‘loving families’, which presents the policies as morally wrong. Similarly, portraying the asylum seekers as ‘kids’ or ‘babies’ associates them with connotations of innocence; by then arguing that they should not be ‘punished’ due to their parents’ decisions (extract 41, ll. 3-4) ‘or just because of the situation’ (extract 41, ll. 4-5), the system is not only portrayed as unfair for punishing someone who has done no wrong, but as particularly unjust given that the subjects are young and therefore more vulnerable. The use of detention for children is thereby condemned on grounds that it is morally unjust in an absolute sense: ‘something that [...] should never happen’ (extract 41, l. 2).

Extract 42 takes this further by arguing that detention should never be applied to anyone. This is done through the juxtaposition of two identity categories: ‘criminals’ (l. 1) and ‘families’ (l. 2). By associating prisons with criminals, this implies there is a rightful place for those who break the law; by contrast, those who have not broken the law are not criminals and therefore should not be imprisoned. As with the work of Goodman (2007), the association of ‘families’ and ‘detention’ suggests an absurdity: families have a natural place in society and therefore a system that detains them without having broken the law is inherently immoral. Lynn and Lea (2003) similarly illustrated how the use of detention could be criticised by portraying detention centres as prisons and construing detainees as children, pregnant women and other vulnerable people. This draws on a form of place-identity (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005) whereby the identity categories associated with detainees is placed in stark contrast to the way in which the detention centres are portrayed. Ultimately this has the function of suggesting that asylum seekers do not belong in detention centres, thereby criticising the use of detention. In terms of subject positions, this type of discourse attempts to position asylum seekers as children and families, rather than criminals, thus highlighting their humanity rather than portraying them as objects that may be controlled by the asylum system.

The following extract similarly draws on notions of children and families in order to criticise the use of dawn raids and detention. This extract is from two Scottish

locals and comes during a discussion of their reasons for campaigning against the dawn raids of asylum seekers.

*Extract 43: Locals 5 & 6*

- 1 L6 [imagine your son in handcuffs]  
2 L5 [imagine you wake up] (.) you watch [two you watch little] (0.9) boys  
3 L6 [(unclear) handcuffs]  
4 L5 (.) come doon like that with their night- their pyjamas on (0.9) and the boys were  
5 separated from their mum=  
6 L6 =yep=  
7 L5 =they had to go with the father=  
8 L6 =they went [with the father  
9 L5 [they were pushed into a (.) a big van  
10 SK yeah  
11 L6 in a cage  
12 L5 ((high pitched squeaky voice)) what have they done? (.) not  
13 L6 in a cage [in the] back of a van  
14 SK [yeah] right yeah  
15 L5 and as my husband said (.) just think that if that was your grandchild  
16 SK mmm  
17 L5 I said I couldnae watch it  
18 SK mmm  
19 L5 so that was what we did so as I say so (1.0) we only done I think what any decent  
20 human being would say well Christ no I cannae watch it let's do- and we had time on  
21 our hands as I say I dear say if we'd had to go to work we couldnae have done it but  
22 we didnae↑ (0.9) we could go back up the road and have a wee nap so  
23 SK hhh hhh=  
24 L5 =but we didnae do anything great↑ (.) we didn't think so, still don't to this day don't  
25 think I've done anything [great  
26 L6 [this one girl taken away from here (.) she was taken three times  
27 away=



28 L5 =God I know  
 29 L6 and I went up to visit her up at Dungavel ((detention centre)) (1.0) and (0.7) she was  
 30 talking to the guy (.) who took us up (0.8) and her wee boy (.) now we watched this  
 31 wee fella grow up (1.1) and he was talkin' to me and he went a:h (0.6) auntie [name]  
 32 (.) can I ask you a question? (0.6) I says of course you can (1.0) auntie [name] why  
 33 am I in prison? (0.6) did I do anything wrong?  
 34 L5 [yeah  
 35 SK [mmm=  
 36 L6 =why am I in prison? (1.0) and I'll tell you that will live with me till the day I [die  
 37 L5 [yep

In this extract, Locals 5 and 6 jointly produce an account relating to the dawn raids of asylum seekers and their involvement in a successful campaign to end them in Glasgow. Both of the interviewees start this account with the word 'imagine' (ll. 1-2), which has the effect of locating the listener in an empathetic position in relation to the asylum seekers who were being detained. Local 6 uses this to position the listener in the place of a parent of a child who was being taken away: 'imagine your son in handcuffs' (l. 1). In a slightly different way, Local 5 requests the listener to imagine watching little boys coming down with 'their pyjamas on', being separated 'from their mum' and 'pushed into a (.) a big van' (ll. 4-9). As with the previous extract, both of these constructions, and the narrative which follows, draw on a notion of family that is construed as incongruous with notions of criminal justice as well as implying that children should not be separated from their mothers (Goodman, 2007). Terms such as 'handcuffs' (l. 1), 'a big van' (l. 9) and 'a cage' (l. 11) are hearable as severe forms of intervention and restraint that appear out of proportion, harsh and unreasonable in relation to those they restrain, the 'little boys' in their 'pyjamas' (ll. 2-4).

Furthermore, not only are children implicitly associated with an innocence that is incompatible with these harsh forms of intervention, they are more explicitly presented as innocent through the rhetorical question: 'what have they done?' (l. 12). Asking the listener to imagine that this is happening to their children or grandchildren also has the

function of constructing a form of close relationship between the listener and the asylum seekers, so that they are presented as people for whom one should care, rather than, for example, non-nationals who do not deserve the sympathy of British citizens. This construction works to address the issue of ‘costs to self’ versus ‘duty to others’ (Every, 2008) by re-construing the ‘others’ as ‘self’ through positioning them as belonging to one’s own family.

This narrative leads into Local 5’s account of why she and Local 6 became actively involved in campaigning to end the dawn raids. Through the production of the reported conversation with her husband, Local 5 is positioned as being a grandmother of one of the children who was being detained, and by saying ‘I couldnae watch it’ (l. 17), her actions are justified through an inability to avoid taking action. This is further developed when she says ‘we only done I think what any decent human being would’ (ll. 19-20) and stating ‘we didnae do anything great’ (l. 24). In this way, their activities are not presented as, say heroic or politically motivated, but rather as stemming from a natural sense of empathy and a sense of human decency. This has the effect of normalising the behaviour, so as to suggest that other people should take a similar stance in relation to dawn raids, as well as positioning those who tolerate or support dawn raids as lacking attributes that are central to being human and thus criticising them.

This narrative is reiterated by Local 6 in her account of visiting the detention centre Dungavel. As with the account of the ‘little boys’, stating that a ‘girl’ was ‘taken three times away’ (ll. 26-27) can be heard as harsh and unfair, as the term ‘girl’ implicitly references a sense of innocence and being taken away three times is hearable as excessive. Similarly, presenting the boy as ‘her wee boy’ (l. 30) and ‘wee fella’ (l. 31) likewise presents him as innocent as well as constructing a close connection between the interviewee and the boy. The use of the term ‘auntie’ (ll. 31-32) further draws on the theme of ‘family’ so that the relationship between asylum seekers, particularly young ones, and local people is presented as a close relationship that should not be severed. The reported speech of the boy asking the rhetorical questions, ‘why am I in prison? (0.6) did I do anything wrong?’ (ll. 32-33), further builds on this sense of innocence through a lack of knowledge. Furthermore, by presenting the detention centre as a

prison, which implies the ‘prisoners’ must be responsible for a ‘wrong’, works to criticise the practice of detaining children as the innocence associated with children is placed in clear opposition to the idea of imprisoning them for doing wrong (Lynn & Lea, 2003). Moreover, the implied answer – that the boy has done no wrong – portrays the system as being inhumane and unfair by ‘imprisoning’ someone who is innocent. The impact of such speech from the boy is portrayed by Local 6 saying ‘that will live with me till the day I die’ (l. 36), and works to further explain and justify their actions in campaigning to stop dawn raids.

Overall then this extract illustrates how notions of family and the positioning of local people in an imagined and empathetic relationship with the children of asylum seekers, alongside the depiction of dawn raids and detention as harsh and prison-like forms of intervention, work to criticise the use of dawn raids and child detention as well as normalise and legitimise the actions of local people to campaign against their use. The following extract also relates to detention, and provides one asylum seeker’s views on the experiences of being detained. The extract follows the interviewee explaining his accommodation situation and mentioning that he had been detained.

*Extract 44: Refugee 10*

- 1 SK what was it like (0.5) in detention?
- 2 R10 (1.8) ppwww (.) it’s all right heh heh heh (.)
- 3 SK [okay heh heh]
- 4 R10 [heh heh] (0.6) yeah know it’s all right heh
- 5 SK yeah
- 6 R10 (0.8) yeah it’s (.) it’s hard but you just have to cope with it
- 7 SK okay
- 8 R10 yeah
- 9 SK mmm
- 10 R10 (0.8) it’s it is so slow (0.8) for me I’ve always believed that (1.2) you can only
- 11 change something which is within your hands (.) eh

- 12 SK right=  
13 R10 =if some f- something's out of your hands  
14 SK mmm  
15 R10 you cannot change it  
16 SK yeah  
17 R10 so you just have to wait the situation to cha(h)nge=  
18 SK =yeah sure  
19 R10 so once you're there (.) you can't do anything  
20 SK okay right  
21 R10 you can only handle your part which is (1.0) to put in your case  
22 SK yeah  
23 R10 yeah (.) and if they're convinced or not then (.) it's up to them

In line 2, the interviewee describes the experience of being in detention as 'all right'; however his laughter suggests that this might be an unusual response to a question about an experience which would be assumed as quite unpleasant. That the interviewee goes on to provide an account for this experience being 'all right' provides some evidence that this evaluation is somehow strange. The experience is explained in more detail as being both 'hard' and something 'you just have to cope with' (l. 6), which mitigates the difficulties of being in detention, particularly through the use of 'just' (l. 6), which suggests it is something minor. This is further accounted for by relating it to personal characteristics: 'for me I've always believed' (l. 10). This suggests the reason the experience was not so bad relates to an individual disposition rather than the experience being a general aspect of being in detention that is likely to be common across all those who have been detained. As with extract 3, in which an asylum seeker interviewee suggested that he did not face any difficulties in the UK, here the portrayal of detention as something that is 'all right' may suggest that the speaker is negotiating a dilemma in which 'complaining' about his experiences in the host society could portray him in a negative way.

The situation described by the interviewee also positions asylum seekers in a place of relative passivity in contrast to those who decide their cases. For instance, the

interviewee says that ‘you just have to wait the situation to cha(h)nge’ (l. 17). He also says that the only thing you can do is ‘put in your case’ and whether ‘they’re convinced or not’ is ‘up to them’ (ll. 21-23). In a way, this legitimises the asylum process by suggesting that there is nothing else that can be done to challenge the system; rather, all asylum seekers can do is put forward their case and wait for the decision makers to make their decision. It also positions the speakers as being relatively rational and respectful of the asylum system, and willing to go along with the policies and procedures they have in place. This extract is therefore interesting for the ways that it actually serves to legitimise the use of detention to some extent, even though it comes from an asylum seeker who has direct experience of being detained.

The final extract deals with the related issue of deportation. In a similar way to some of the previous extracts, the interviewee draws on some notions of family in order to criticise being forced to leave the country. Furthermore, they also incorporate notions from a humanitarian discourse. This extract comes during a section of the interview in which the interviewee gave some background to her situation and discussed some of the issues she faced in the UK.

*Extract 45: Refugee 13*

- 1 R13 when last week we went to Home Office for (.) get a visa
- 2 SK mm-hmm
- 3 R13 the result (1.0) they told me you must come back to your country
- 4 SK right
- 5 R13 (1.4) e:h (.) I was crying
- 6 SK mm-hmm
- 7 R13 (1.0) and em (1.0) eh I uh I put everything in my heart (0.8) because I have a ((age))
- 8 (0.5) mmm (.) boy (.) he is enjoyed now in the (0.6) c- in the school and he (.) uh he
- 9 is waiting for his result for ↑higher↓ education
- 10 SK yeah
- 11 R13 and he wants to go to university

12 SK yeah  
 13 R13 he lives here (.) uh for ((number)) years  
 14 SK mm-hmm  
 15 R13 and then (.) why they told me you must come, because my my country's very  
 16 dangerous↑  
 17 SK mm-hmm  
 18 R13 and they made for me stress (.) and last week unfortunately I put in my heart (0.8)  
 19 and last week I was in house (0.6) and I have a problem in my heart  
 20 SK right  
 21 R13 it came and I was in hospital two days  
 22 SK oh no  
 23 R13 nobody (0.8) that- they don't know about this problem because I don't like (0.8) e:m  
 24 (1.0) I don't like talk to ((name of worker)) or ((name of worker)) about my problem  
 25 because I want (.) the uh they will be ↑happy (.)  
 26 SK right okay  
 27 R13 I don't like make stress with them  
 28 SK [sure]  
 29 R13 [and] (1.8) uh but the doctor told me (.) your heart has a problem and you must come  
 30 (.) here to be (.) angiography  
 31 SK right  
 32 R13 okay (.) when I thinking I'm thinking about this problem (.) I'm an asylum seeker  
 33 SK yeah=  
 34 R13 =what difference between me and refugee? only a one word  
 35 SK hhh  
 36 R13 and what is label of an asylum seeker? we are human

In this extract, the interviewee portrays the asylum process as having a direct negative impact on her, both physically and emotionally. For instance, upon learning that she must return to her country, she says 'I was crying [...] I put everything in my heart' (ll. 5-7). In this way the threat of returning to her country is construed as a real danger, as it has a direct impact on her emotions. However the interviewee portrays the negative effect as not only affecting her; it also would affect her son and his progress at school,

which presents the effects as bad as they would negatively affect a child (Goodman, 2007). The use of the rhetorical question – ‘why they told me you must come’ (l. 15) – implies that there is no good reason for them being asked to return. Moreover, the request to return is contrasted with the construction of her country as ‘very dangerous’ (ll. 15-16), suggesting that the Home Office would be responsible for putting them in a dangerous situation and therefore any harm they might come to. In this way the Home Office is made responsible for the physical impact of the stress: ‘I have a problem in my heart’ (l. 19). The Home Office is therefore criticised for emotional, physical and potentially life-threatening impact it is having on the interviewee and her family.

At a later point in the extract, the interviewee questions the asylum seeker label itself: ‘what difference between me and refugee? only a one word [...] and what is label of an asylum seeker? we are human’ (ll. 34-36). This turns a bureaucratic definition, albeit one that has an important impact on those subject to it, and turns it into a simple linguistic issue: the difference between asylum seekers and refugees amounts only to words. Furthermore, the rhetorical question ‘what is label of an asylum seeker?’ (l. 36) implies that it is meaningless; and further, that the interviewee and other asylum seekers can be described in another word: ‘human’ (l. 36). Drawing on a humanitarian discourse associates asylum seekers with all other people and therefore implies that they are entitled to the same types of rights and freedoms, including the right to live without fear for one’s life. In this way the Home Office is portrayed as somewhat petty and lacking empathy for not recognising asylum seekers for what they are – that is, human. The use of the term is used in a way which is self-sufficient and therefore difficult to argue with; how could someone argue that asylum seekers are not human? In this way the interviewee’s right to asylum is made difficult to challenge.

Overall then this extract illustrates how humanitarian discourse can be used to portray asylum seekers as having the right to life, freedom and staying in the UK, particularly through challenging the real meaning of the term ‘asylum seeker’, as well as highlighting the way in which the speaker has been a good member of society. In contrast the Home Office is portrayed as bureaucratic and uncaring, and therefore to be criticised.

## Conclusions

This chapter has built on the work of the previous two chapters by exploring the way that interviewees talked about various aspects of the asylum system and their consequences. Following some of the work by Davies and Harré (1990), a key element of the analysis was focusing on how the discourse deployed a range of ‘subject positions’, in terms of the speaker themselves but also in terms of how the various organisations and agents mentioned in the talk were positioned. Using this approach, this chapter focused on: 1) the refugee status determination process; 2) the right of asylum seekers to work; and 3) destitution, detention and deportation.

As was expected, the interviewees generally spoke in ways that were critical of the asylum system and supported the extension of rights to asylum seekers and refugees. This generally involved speaking about the Home Office in ways that portrayed them as being unfair, unethical or as otherwise responsible for problems. Conversely, asylum seekers tended to be portrayed in positive ways and as being subject to a variety of unfair policies and practices. The constructions also appeared to be oriented towards challenging antagonistic representations of asylum seekers that are evident in public discourse.

More specifically, in terms of the refugee status determination process, some interviewees portrayed the system as being flawed in such a way that it resulted in people having their asylum claims rejected even when they may be in genuine need of protection from persecution. For instance, portraying the Home Office as having a ‘culture of disbelief’ functioned to position the Home Office as having an organisational problem that unfairly works against asylum seekers and refugees, therefore treating them as ‘bogus’ regardless of the legitimacy of their claims. More controversially, portraying the system as ‘fundamentally racist’ positioned the Home Office as more intentionally antagonistic and therefore responsible for the rejection of genuine claims. A slightly different strategy was to present the system as being limited in certain ways that meant people from particular countries were disadvantaged and less likely to have their claims



recognised. All of these constructions function to reposition those who might otherwise be considered as ‘bogus’ or ‘fraudulent’ as actually being the victims of an unjust system.

Alternatively, the asylum system was defended by portraying it as the only option available to the government. More specifically, it was portrayed as being the result of people using the asylum system in an ‘abusive’ manner and entering for the purposes of economic migration rather than due to fleeing persecution. This allowed the speaker to split asylum seekers into two groups – economic migrants and genuine refugees – thereby displaying empathy for those who were in need of protection from persecution while placing responsibility for the harsh system onto those who used it fraudulently. This works to legitimise the refugee status determination process while positioning asylum seekers as potentially fraudulent or as economic migrants.

This type of construction is closely related to the policy of preventing asylum seekers from accessing paid employment. In particular, the Home Office (n.d.) states that asylum seekers are not allowed to work on the grounds that this would encourage people to use the asylum system in order to access the UK for economic reasons. In this regard, some of the interview extracts seemed oriented to challenging this argument. For instance, a refugee portrayed himself as skilled, qualified and experienced, and as willing to work on a voluntary basis. This type of construction counters the portrayal of asylum seekers both as a ‘drain’ on society and as being in the UK for economic reasons. That is, having the skills necessary for working portrays asylum seekers as not needing to be reliant on benefits while portraying them as being willing to work without pay suggests they are not in the host society for economic reasons. In this regard, the government was positioned as preventing asylum seekers from working and thereby operating against the interests of the nation. Alternatively, the dichotomy between genuine refugees and economic migrants could be deconstructed by suggesting that all migrants have a general drive towards working and being employed, and that this exists independently of people’s reasons for entering the UK. In this way, the issue of employment and the basis of people’s asylum claims are separated.

It was interesting to note that the idea that some asylum seekers were ‘abusing’ the asylum system could be used to argue for or against the right to work. For instance, one refugee argued that asylum seekers had an obligation to contribute to the country and that if they did not contribute then they should be returned to their country of origin, thus portraying the right to work as bringing attention to those in the country fraudulently. Alternatively, in line with the Home Office (n.d.) statement, one interviewee argued against the right to work on the grounds that it could encourage people to use the asylum system to access the UK for economic purposes. Both of these arguments position asylum seekers as potentially ‘bogus’ or as potential ‘economic migrants’ and yet argue for or against the extension of their rights in the UK.

Further analyses in this chapter illustrated that there appears to be a discursive struggle over the portrayal of destitution as a ‘tool’ or ‘instrument’ of policy. In this regard, some of the professional interviewees suggested that the government used this in order to force people to comply with the asylum system and particularly in order to pressure them into agreeing to ‘voluntary’ return. In this way, the government was portrayed as positioning asylum seekers as ‘objects’ of policy, void of ethical concerns, whereas the interviewees positioned them as people who deserved to be treated with dignity. In this regard, the government was portrayed as being responsible for forcing some asylum seekers into inhumane and degrading positions.

In line with some previous discursive research (e.g., Goodman, 2007; Every, 2006), the use of detention was criticised through portraying asylum seekers as families or children and construing detention centres as equivalent to prisons. As a form of place-identity (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005), this functioned to draw upon the positive connotations of ‘family’, as well as the notions of innocence associated with ‘children’, and place them in contrast to the harsh and criminal notions of ‘prison’ in order to criticise the use of detention and imply that asylum seekers do not belong in such places. However, it is worth noting that one of the asylum seeker interviewees described his experience of being in detention as ‘all right’, and appeared to be negotiating a dilemma in terms of voicing criticisms of the asylum system while being dependent on the host society for protection. In this regard, the use of detention serves to position asylum

seekers as powerless whereas their construction as ‘families’ works to construe them in a positive way that challenges the policies of the UK government.

Finally, the last extract, from an asylum seeker, portrayed the asylum system as being damaging to people, both physically and emotionally, through threatening people with being sent back to a dangerous place. In this regard, the Home Office was portrayed as positioning asylum seekers in a harmful way whereas the speaker attempted to counter this through portraying herself and her family as belonging in the host society. The extract finished by illustrating how the labels of ‘asylum seeker’ and ‘refugee’ are presented as being merely linguistic differences and that rather people who fall into these categories are ‘human’ and therefore entitled to the general rights they deserve.

In terms of subject positions (Davies & Harré, 1990), overall this chapter has illustrated how much of the interview talk functions to challenge the positioning of asylum seekers as fraudulent, criminal or otherwise undeserving of dignity, and instead position them in terms of a humanitarian discourse (Every, 2008) or otherwise position them as undeserving of harsh treatment. In this regard, the Home Office was often positioned as uncaring about asylum seekers, as treating them as objects of policy rather than as people, and as being responsible for placing them in degrading situations. These discourses function not only in terms of justifying or criticising particular policies, but may also function to reinforce some of the constructions discussed in the previous chapters. For instance, portraying asylum seekers as potentially fraudulent works to undermine the legitimacy of their presence in the host society and their portrayal as a drain on society works to justify antagonism towards them. In contrast, positioning asylum seekers as potential subjects of an unjust system, as being potential contributors to society and as being people who deserve to be treated with dignity, all work towards justifying their presence in the host society and reinforcing positive social relations between asylum seekers / refugees and members of the local community.

However, it is worth noting some differences between these constructions and those presented in the first chapter. In terms of place-identity (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005), several of the extracts in the first empirical chapter justified the presence of asylum seekers through specific constructions of nations, including references to the

dangers in asylum seekers' countries of origin or how the UK was relatively problem-free or could benefit from asylum seekers' presence. In contrast, many of the extracts in this chapter relied on more general constructions of asylum seekers that appealed to standards of dignity and humane treatment, or else constructed asylum seekers in ways that criticised asylum policies through the use of strong contrasts between notions of place and identity (such as 'children' being held in 'prisons'). Although the final extract made reference to the dangers present in the interviewee's country of origin, part of her argument for remaining in the host society relied on constructions of her son's attachment to the country rather than place-specific descriptions of the UK. This illustrates that criticisms of asylum policy may draw on constructions of place-identity, but these need not involve the emphasis of characteristics specific to the host society or portray asylum seekers' rights as stemming from their membership of the local community. The following chapter will discuss these issues in more depth and draw together the findings of the empirical chapters in the context of previous research and theory.



## **Ch. 6. Discussion**

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This thesis has addressed a gap in the existing discursive research on asylum seekers, refugees and integration by developing a close analysis of interviews with asylum seekers, refugees, professionals who support asylum seekers and Scottish locals who live in the areas where asylum seekers are housed. This chapter will bring together the main results, highlight theoretical implications and practical applications, note some personal reflections, discuss some of the methodological limitations, make suggestions for future research and draw together the final conclusions.

### **Summary of main results**

The first empirical chapter focused on arguments relating to the presence of asylum seekers and refugee in the host society and the role of place-identity (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005). It illustrated that the constructions of asylum seekers' countries of origin and the host society were constitutive of identity and functioned to legitimise or resist their presence. More specifically, the presence of asylum seekers was justified through portraying their countries of origin as dangerous, and therefore constructing refugees as genuine, and portraying the host society as problem-free and therefore a suitable place of refuge. Alternatively, the presence of asylum seekers could be legitimised through

portraying asylum seekers as being a benefit to the host society, often related to their countries of origin, and construing the host society as being able to benefit from their presence. Conversely, the presence of asylum seekers and refugees could be resisted through portraying the host society as having limited means and space and therefore as being a place that was unable to provide refuge. This argument drew on the implicit assumption that a nation's resources should be prioritised for its citizens.

These results support the findings of previous discursive studies that found arguments supporting asylum seekers and refugees would portray their countries as being dangerous (e.g., Every, 2006; Every & Augoustinos, 2008b) and some arguments against the presence of asylum seekers portrayed the host society as having limited resources (Every & Augoustinos, 2008a). Drawing on the notion of place-identity (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005), I illustrated that not only does the argument rely upon this construction, but this construction functions to constitute asylum seekers' and refugees' identities in specific ways, either as being 'genuine' refugees who can appropriately seek refuge in the host society, or as people who could not or should not be provided with protection in the host society. In particular, constructing the relevant countries in a frame that focused upon 'problems' functioned to present refugees as deserving of protection, on the basis that they were in danger and the host society was safe, whereas frames that focused upon economic issues functioned to present refugees as undeserving of protection, on the basis that they were entering the host society for economic reasons and the host society had no responsibility or capability for supporting them.

Analysis of the interviews with asylum seekers and refugees also highlighted that they may deny the existence of problems in the host society. In line with the arguments of Van den Berg (2003), this appears in contradiction to the problems that they discuss at other points in their interviews, suggesting that they are managing a dilemma (Billig et al., 1988). The dilemma may relate to the difficulty in making 'complaints' about the host society without seeming ungrateful. In line with the research of Colic-Peisker (2005) and Verkuyten (2005a), denying problems functions to legitimise their place in the host society. One important implication is that it makes it more difficult to identify and address problems that asylum seekers and refugees may face.

The analysis also produced some interesting findings relating to the construction of national interests. For instance, Reicher and Hopkins (2001) suggested that policies are more likely to get support if they are portrayed as consonant with the national interests and Boswell (2005) argued that support for asylum seekers could be encouraged by developing a national identity that emphasised providing support to those in need. However, the analysis highlighted that the relevant constituency is not necessarily the nation, as interviewees drew upon constructions of the 'community' in order to argue for or against the presence of asylum seekers. Moreover, in line with the findings of Every (2006), constructing the nation as 'generous' functions to argue *against* the presence of asylum seekers and refugees, through suggesting that the nation has already given enough and providing further support is not appropriate or possible. This suggests that advocates of asylum seekers and refugees should be aware of the complex relationship between constructions of community and nation in arguments relating to the provision of asylum.

The second empirical chapter focused on the relationships between asylum seekers, refugees and members of the local population. In particular, it focused on the public perception of asylum seekers and the role of the media, racism and violence, and integration. The analysis particularly focused on the ways in which different individuals and groups were constructed and how this implied certain responsibilities and supported particular types of approaches to social change.

One of the interesting results from this chapter was how members of the local population who were portrayed as antagonistic towards asylum seekers were often excused on the basis that they were 'ignorant' in some way. That is, rather than being held responsible for their antagonism, their culpability was minimised by portraying them as not having access to the facts or due to being misled by the media. This has a range of potential functions: it avoids making general negative evaluations of the local population, suggests that refugees are 'really' legitimate and implies there is scope for improving public attitudes through education. The interviewees also tended to draw upon implicit arguments that implied resources and jobs rightfully belong to members of the local community or the nation. In order to address this, some of the interviewees



portrayed asylum seekers and refugees as being part of the community, which overcomes the 'zero-sum' construction of resource allocation. It was therefore interesting that interviewees did not directly challenge the assumption that resources belong to members of a community or nation; this suggests that this view is relatively hegemonic and therefore may be difficult to contest.

These findings also applied to asylum seekers' and refugees' constructions of racism and violence. That is, the perpetrators tended to be portrayed in ways that minimised their culpability and suggested their views and actions were due to a lack of understanding about asylum seekers and refugees. Moreover, interviewees tended to downplay the seriousness of violent incidents or suggest explanations other than racism. In line with Colic-Peisker (2005) and Verkuyten (2005a), downplaying or denying the existence of racism implies that asylum seekers and refugees have a potential place in the host society and suggests there is scope for positive social progression. Where accusations of racism were made, these were produced tentatively, reluctantly and after eliminating other possible explanations. This is consistent with previous discursive research, which has found that accusations of racism tend to be produced in a sensitive manner (Every & Augoustinos, 2007; Goodman, 2010; Goodman & Burke, 2010; Riggs & Due, 2010). Interestingly, some of the extracts illustrated that interviewees could put the issue of racism 'in play' while avoiding some of the negative consequences associated with making direct accusations of racism. These findings are particularly important as no previous discursive research (to my knowledge) has analysed accounts of seemingly racially motivated violence.

The third empirical chapter also analysed constructions of integration. In line with the research of Durrheim and Dixon (2005) and Bowskill et al. (2007), the constructions of notions of integration functioned to legitimise or challenge particular forms of social relations. In particular, some of the constructions of integration focused on notions of geographical and spatial organisation, so that policies that placed asylum seekers together in poor accommodation and deprived areas were criticised for their negative effects. In line with some 'two-way' concepts of integration described by Castles et al. (2002), some of the constructions challenged 'assimilationist' portrayals of

integration (Bowskill et al., 2007) and instead portrayed integration as involving asylum seekers / refugees and members of the local population. This illustrated that constructions of integration are not simply neutral ways of describing processes of intercultural contact, but rather perform social functions in terms of allocating responsibility to particular groups. Moreover, some of the constructions of integration applied the concept to non-migrants as well as asylum seekers and refugees. This functioned to justify the work of organisations that support general members of the local community as well as asylum seekers and works to counter accusations of special treatment directed at asylum seekers. Such constructions of integration therefore place responsibility on all members of society.

The third empirical chapter focused on discourse related to aspects of the asylum system. In particular, this section drew on the notion of subject positions (Davies & Harré, 1990) in order to explore how the discourse positioned various actors, especially asylum seekers and refugees. The chapter focused on the refugee status determination process, the right of asylum seekers to work, and destitution, detention and deportation.

In relation to the refugee status determination process, the interviews with professionals illustrated how the system was portrayed as positioning asylum seekers as potentially fraudulent. In contrast, the speakers often portrayed asylum seekers as victims of an unfair system, thus criticising the Home Office while positioning ‘failed’ asylum seekers as potentially ‘genuine’. Alternatively, one of the professional interviewees portrayed the Home Office as having no choice but to institute an asylum system and positioned ‘fraudulent’ asylum seekers as being responsible for the government’s response. This supports the research of Phillips and Hardy (1997), who found that the Home Office splits asylum seekers into ‘economic migrants in disguise’ and ‘genuine refugees’ in order to justify stringent asylum policies and practices. This also has the effect of portraying all asylum seekers as potentially suspect.

In relation to asylum seekers’ right to work, portraying themselves as skilled and willing to work without pay functioned to position them as being potentially beneficial to the host society whilst countering suggestions that they were claiming asylum for economic reasons. In this regard it supported the findings of Leudar et al. (2008) in

terms of the way that asylum seekers may counter ‘hostile themes’ within public discourse. The right to work was justified through criticising the current policy and portraying it as creating problems, such as increasing isolation or reinforcing negative public attitudes towards asylum seekers. These constructions therefore not only counter negative portrayals but also legitimise the extension of asylum seekers’ rights. Interestingly, in one case an asylum seeker justified the right to work through arguing that it would bring attention to those who were acting fraudulently. This suggests that references to ‘bogus’ asylum seekers may be used to argue for the extension of asylum seekers’ rights, not simply to justify harsher policies. This provided an interesting counterpoint to the analysis of one professional’s interview, whereby he argued against the right to work through suggesting this would encourage ‘economic migrancy’. As identified in previous discursive research (e.g., Capdevila & Callaghan, 2008; Lynn & Lea, 2003), references to economic migrants function to restrict the rights of asylum seekers and justify the use of harsh policies.

Finally, the third chapter addressed discourse related to destitution, detention and deportation. In relation to destitution, the Home Office was portrayed as using this as a ‘tool’ in order to force asylum seekers to comply with the asylum system. The constructions implied the Home Office positioned asylum seekers as ‘objects’ of policy whereas the speakers rather attempted to position them as ‘subjects’ who should be treated ethically, rather than treated as a means to an end. In this way the Home Office was criticised for their lack of ethics and the way they forced people into in humane and degrading positions. In line with the findings of Goodman (2007), detention was criticised through portraying asylum seekers as ‘children’ or ‘family’. Such portrayals implied that detention was an inappropriate and harsh place for asylum seekers. Interestingly, an asylum seeker portrayed the experience of being detained as ‘all right’, which positioned him as being ‘reasonable’ while to some extent legitimising the practice. The final extract, from an asylum seeker, illustrated how deportation could be criticised through emphasising the connection they had built with the host society, highlighting the negative impact the stress was having on them and portraying the country of origin as dangerous. In line with some previous research (Every, 2008),

drawing on a humanitarian discourse functioned to discredit deportation by arguing that all people are entitled to safety. Here, the difference between an asylum seeker and a refugee was portrayed as a mere linguistic difference, suggesting that the speaker is entitled to the same basic rights as any other person.

## **Implications**

Although each chapter focused on a specific topic and theoretical concept, there are important links across the findings. For instance, the first empirical chapter focused on place-identity and notions of belonging, illustrating that the way places were constructed functioned to constitute notions of identity and thereby legitimise or resist the presence of asylum seekers. This also applies to the way that relations between asylum seekers / refugees and other members of the local community are portrayed. For instance, the interviewees tended to portray antagonism as stemming from a minority of people in the local community and as being linked to ignorance. This portrays the host society as only having a limited level of antagonism and suggests this antagonism is amenable to change, which functions to construct the host society as a place where asylum seekers and refugees can belong. With regard to the asylum system, portraying asylum seekers as ‘children’ or ‘family’, while presenting the use of detention as harsh, utilises a form of place-identity that presents detention as inappropriate. Similarly, the practice of deportation was criticised through portraying asylum seekers as having connections to the local community and construing the country of origin as dangerous. The present analysis therefore contributes to the growing literature on place-identity (e.g., Bowskill et al., 2007; Durrheim & Dixon, 2005; Hugh-Jones & Madill, 2009; McKinlay & McVittie, 2007) by illustrating that such constructs may perform complex mutually constitutive relations between place and identity which may legitimise or challenge particular forms of social relations and particular policies relating to the movement and control of people.

The second chapter focused on the construction of particular groups and individuals and the allocation of responsibility. For instance, antagonism from the local

population was presented as only partially their responsibility and instead the responsibility was placed on the media and the government for providing people with a distorted view of reality. These notions are also relevant to arguments relating to the presence of asylum seekers in the host society. For instance, portraying asylum seekers as in danger and the UK as being problem-free implied a responsibility on the host society to provide refuge to those in need. Alternatively, the host society could be portrayed as having a responsibility to its own citizens first, and the governments of refugees' countries of origin as having a responsibility for the problems, thus absolving the UK of any responsibility for providing refuge. In terms of policy, the Home Office was portrayed as acting unfairly against asylum seekers, particularly through the use of destitution, detention and deportation as harsh measures of control, thus presenting the Home Office as being responsible for placing asylum seekers in degrading, damaging and dangerous situations. Importantly, asylum seekers tended to be portrayed as not responsible for their situations and rather as being affected by external events. In contrast, the actions of the Home Office could be legitimised through portraying economic migrants and fraudulent asylum seekers as being responsible for the Home Office having to enact harsh asylum policies. In line with previous discursive research, (Sambaraju, & Kirkwood, 2010), this analysis illustrates how the allocation of responsibility is produced through a relationship between narrative construction and the construed identity of relevant groups.

The third chapter focused on the role of subject positions in discourses related to asylum policy. In particular, the extracts portrayed the Home Office as positioning asylum seekers as objects of policy, rather than as people, and in this way the Home Office was positioned as unethical and uncaring. In relation to arguments regarding the presence of asylum seekers, when asylum seekers were portrayed as being in danger, this positioned those who supported their presence as being caring and those who resisted it as being unethical. Alternatively, portraying the UK as having limited space and resources and a primary duty to its citizens positioned asylum seekers as not eligible for refuge in the UK. Furthermore, this positioned the speakers as being 'practical', due to their concern over resources (Wetherell & Potter, 1992), and as having a 'reasonable'

concern over the use of resources for members of the nation (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Just as the humanitarian arguments regarding asylum seekers can be seen as a dilemma between ‘duty to others’ and ‘costs of self’ (Every, 2008), the debate has a related aspect of competing attempts to position people as being ‘ethical’ vs. being ‘practical’. In the second chapter, portraying antagonism as due to ‘ignorance’ similarly positioned the speakers as ‘reasonable’ rather than being ungrateful or overly sensitive. This was particularly relevant where asylum seekers and refugees spoke of their experiences of racism or violence. That is, they often managed the apparent taboo on making accusations of racism (Every & Augoustinos, 2007; Goodman, 2010; Goodman & Burke, 2010; Riggs & Due, 2010) by positioning themselves as sympathetic to the perpetrators of violence and as not eager to rush to a conclusion of racism. This illustrates how difficult it may be to challenge instances of racism, given that positioning oneself as a ‘victim of racism’ may have negative consequences, and therefore people may resist this position.

## **Applications**

In line with the arguments of other researchers, this study is intended to help understand some of the oppressive operations of discourse and identify counter discourses in order to create positive social change (Kirkwood et al., 2005; LeCouteur & Augoustinos, 2001; Lynn & Lea, 2003; Tuffin, 2008; Verkuyten, 2005b). In this regard, I will highlight potential applications in four key areas: 1) advocacy on behalf of asylum seekers and refugees; 2) racism and hate crime; 3) concepts of integration; and 4) reforming asylum policy and practices.

Boswell (2005) suggested that it would be helpful to develop a national identity that is based on helping those in need. In this regard, the Scottish Government has developed a campaign based on the argument that Scotland is ‘no place for racism’ (Scottish Executive, 2006), however there is no obvious campaign to define Scotland or the UK as a place that helps those in need. Moreover, there may be problems with this approach, given that the present study supported previous research (e.g., Every, 2008) in

finding that portrayals of the host society as ‘generous’ is actually used in order to argue against providing further support to asylum seekers and refugees. Rather, through applying the concept of place-identity (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005), it appears that arguments may function to justify providing support to asylum seekers through constructing their countries of origin as full of danger and the host society as a place that is relatively problem-free, thus portraying asylum seekers as ‘genuinely’ in need of protection and the host society as an appropriate place for them to receive refuge. In terms of arguing in favour of the national interest (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001), although some of the interviewees drew on this argument by highlighting the benefits asylum seekers and refugees bring by working in the UK, this risks framing the issue in economic terms, which may confound the right of asylum with people’s desire to work, as well as making this an economic issue which may be rejected by those in the host nation, particularly in times of economic downturn. As illustrated by one interviewee, one strategy for dealing with this problem is to separate out people’s general desire to work from their right to asylum. Interestingly, many of the interviewees drew on constructions of the local community, rather than the nation, in order to justify the presence of asylum seekers and refugees, and this may be an alternative strategy for advocating on behalf of asylum seekers, so long as their identity was made consonant with the construction of the community. In sum, advocates should be aware of the complex relations between constructions of place and identity, and aware of both ethical and economic arguments, when promoting arguments about the presence of asylum seekers.

The section relating to asylum seekers’ experience of violence and racism is particularly important given the dearth of previous research on this topic. More specifically, previous discursive research has identified the ways in which majority group members may produce discourse that justifies inequality while denying being racist (e.g., Augoustinos et al., 1999; van Dijk, 1993; Wetherell & Potter, 1992) and this analysis suggests there is a parallel process whereby an apparent taboo on making accusations of racism results in members of minority groups similarly denying or downplaying the existence of racism, even when they have been victims of seemingly

racially motivated violence. Although this may help to justify their legitimacy in the host society (Colic-Peisker, 2005; Verkuyten, 2005a), it has a similar effect to 'new racist' discourse in making racism more difficult to identify and address. This has particular implications for 'hate crimes', the definition of which may require the victims to perceive the acts as racially motivated (Jardine & Bellamy, 2009). Specifically, the analysis of asylum seekers' accounts of violence and racism suggest that they orient to an apparent taboo on making accusations of racism (Every & Augoustinos, 2007; Goodman, 2010; Goodman & Burke, 2010; Riggs & Due, 2010) and thus resist defining the events as racially motivated.

This raises both ontological and epistemological questions about racist violence: that is, what constitutes racist violence and how can we know that something is racist? Defining something as racist constitutes a political act and it is one that may be very difficult for asylum seekers and refugees to conduct given their reliance on the host society for support and protection. This thesis offers no easy answers to the problem of racist violence but it does suggest that the host society needs to be aware of some of the issues in this regard and vigilant in order to protect people from its consequences. In this regard, it is worth noting that the high-profile murder of an asylum seeker in Glasgow in 2001 was initially treated as racially motivated, but this aspect of the charge was removed during the court process and ultimately no evidence was found to support the case for the murder being racially motivated, highlighting the difficulty of this concept (Coole, 2002).

This thesis also contributes to previous research on the discursive construction of integration and intercultural relations (e.g., Bowskill et al., 2007; Durrheim & Dixon, 2005). The analysis highlights the ways in which particular constructions of integration work to legitimise particular forms of social relations and policies and emphasise the responsibility of certain groups. As illustrated by Bowskill et al., integration can be equated with assimilation in ways that suggest minority groups are responsible for changing to become more like the majority group. However, my analysis illustrated that two-way constructions of integration functioned to criticise this depiction and instead placed responsibility on the majority group in terms of helping people to integrate



without forcing them to become more like the majority group. Moreover, the concept of integration could be applied to non-migrant members of the local community as well (Ager & Strang, 2004a). This is interesting as it raises fundamental questions about the possibilities of integration where the host community itself is not integrated; that is, what exactly are asylum seekers and refugees supposed to integrate into? However, it also implies that the appropriate approach for policy and practice is to provide resources and support to all members of the local community in order to increase their overall levels of 'integration' and well-being. This may have particular relevance for the integration of asylum seekers in deprived areas, as it would overcome the view that asylum seekers were receiving 'special treatment' in areas where many of the local people felt they lacked basic resources and opportunities (e.g., Wren, 2007). Approaches to integration could therefore focus both on assisting people to achieve the same levels of integration as the wider population and working to bring together people from different cultural backgrounds. This fits with the Scottish Government's (2011) more recent approach of incorporating the funding of services for asylum seekers and refugees within an overall objective of addressing inequality. However, in order to be effective such an approach needs to ensure that it also caters to the specific needs of asylum seekers and refugees, including language issues, family separation and experiences of trauma (Barclay et al., 2003).

The analysis presented in this thesis also suggests that there is a form of discursive struggle regarding the legitimacy of asylum policies. For instance, some of the interviewees portrayed destitution as a 'tool' that was being used to force asylum seekers out of the country by requiring them to sign up to 'voluntary return' in order to access any forms of support. In this regard, the former Minister of State for Borders and Immigration, Phil Woolas, stated: 'I reject any proposition which says that the Government uses destitution as an instrument of policy. That is not the case. It isn't our intention. But the pull factor is a real issue' (Refugee Council, 2009, p. 8). This quote illustrates that the Government is attempting to resist being portrayed as using asylum policies in order to achieve particular ends while disregarding the welfare of asylum seekers. This tension between attempting to be seen as humane and enacting policies and

practices that are often seen as inhumane provides a potential opportunity for advocating in favour of policy reform. That is, as demonstrated in some of the interviews, discursively constructing the government as acting inhumanely may be a way to pressure it to change some of the more harmful practices. For instance, in response to the death of Jimmy Mubenga during a deportation flight from the UK, the Home Affairs Committee (2012) released a report criticising some of the dangerous practices of staff involved in deportations and recommended there be better monitoring of deportations. This illustrates that there is some scope for improving policies and practices where they can be shown to be harmful.

Similarly, the analysis illustrated that the practice of detention may be criticised through portraying asylum seekers as ‘children’ or ‘family’ and therefore presenting their detention as incongruous with the harshness of ‘prisons’. This strategy appears to be effective as the Home Office has stated its intentions to end the detention of children for immigration purposes (UKBA, 2010b). However, it should be noted that at the time of writing the UK was still detaining children. It is also worth considering that this strategy may (eventually) be effective for preventing the detention of children, yet it does not address the damage done to adults who may be detained for extended periods of time.

In terms of the refugee status determination process, recent research on the culture of denial / refusal has illustrated aspects of injustice in the system (Cowan et al., 2011; Souter, 2011). In this regard, a former employee of the UK Border Agency spoke out about these unjust practices, but the organisation denied having a culture of disbelief, although they did admit having a toy ‘grant monkey’ that allegedly functioned as a badge of shame for employees who accepted asylum claims (UKBA, 2010a). Given that the allegations were investigated by the organisation itself, it is perhaps not surprising that they rejected these allegations, however the fact that they attempted to resist such a portrayal suggests that the further investigation and documentation of such a culture may help to reform the system so that it is fairer to applicants. This discursive strategy, as illustrated in the analysis, may therefore be effective if combined with evidence to back up the allegations.

Similarly, the analysis illustrated how people may advocate for the right of asylum seekers to work based on the way in which this may benefit the host society and / or due to the negative impacts unemployment has on individuals. In this regard, UKBA has stated that asylum applicants are not permitted to work ‘because entering the country for economic reasons is not the same as seeking asylum, and it is important to maintain a distinction between the two’ (Home Office, n.d.). As illustrated in previous discursive research (e.g., Phillips & Hardy, 1997), the idea of the ‘economic migrant’ who is disguised as an asylum seeker functions to justify harsh aspects of asylum policy that function as a deterrent. Attempts to justify the right to work face particular difficulties in climates of rising unemployment and economic uncertainty, so that justifying it on the grounds of the ‘national interest’ may fail, as many of the abstracts illustrated that jobs are seen as being naturally prioritised for members of the nation. One of the discursive strategies illustrated in the analysis is to separate people’s desire to work from their claims of asylum thereby legitimising all people’s access to work.

The analytic findings suggest a number of recommendations based on potential applications. These include the following:

- Advocates for asylum seekers and refugees need to be wary of justifying their presence on economic grounds as this risks framing the issue in economic rather than ethical terms, which may be rejected by others, especially in times of economic downturn.
- Advocates for asylum seekers and refugees should discursively construct asylum seekers and refugees in ways that are consonant with their constructions of the local community.
- Researchers and those who work with refugees and asylum seekers need to be aware that refugees and asylum seekers may struggle to articulate some of the difficulties they encounter in the host society, particularly in response to direct questions, due to social conventions around complaining and their reliant position in the host society.

- Police and other practitioners need to be aware that asylum seekers and refugees who are victims of violence may find it difficult to label such experiences as racially motivated.
- Those who work with asylum seekers and refugees should promote the notion of ‘two-way’ integration and notions of integration that relate to all members of society (as long as the unique needs of asylum seekers and refugees are also met), as this may be more successful in facilitating contact between asylum seekers / refugees and other members of the community as well as overcoming the view that asylum seekers or refugees are receiving ‘special privileges’.
- Advocates should continue to highlight the way in which some aspects of the asylum system, such as the use of destitution, constitute inhumane ‘tools’ for controlling asylum seekers, particularly where such criticisms can be backed up with evidence, as this has the potential to reform certain negative aspects of the system.
- Advocates should attempt to argue for the right of asylum seekers to work through separating the essential drive for all migrants to work from the specific grounds on which people are seeking asylum.

Although these recommendations are based on the analytic findings, it would be important to work in partnership with asylum seekers, refugees, practitioners and local people in order to establish their validity and usefulness.

It is important to note that while it may be useful to reform the asylum system so that more people are able to access asylum and that they are treated more humanely in the host societies, it has been argued that it is more appropriate to focus on dismantling the immigration system altogether. For instance, Cohen et al. (2003) argued that the immigration system is a form of structural discrimination that defies normal conventions in law by labelling people rather than acts as being illegal and therefore should be abolished. In this regard, Carens (1987, 2000) drew on a range of philosophical frameworks to illustrate that preventing people from entering other countries is not defensible from a moral liberal standpoint and therefore suggested that people should advocate the adoption of ‘open borders’. He noted that this may currently seem like an

unrealistic and idealistic approach, but compared it with people advocating for the abolition of slavery during times when slavery was commonplace, where making slavery or immigration borders ‘more humane’ involves treating them as inevitable and merely functions to perpetuate them (Carens, 1987). In this regard, Žizek (2008) suggested that it would be more effective and radical to address the inequalities that drive people to flee their countries than to simply open the borders. Squire (2009) also criticised the ‘open borders’ approach, suggesting it was insufficient, and rather advocated approaches that involved gestures of solidarity with people who are excluded and moves to create common identities. Although some of the interviewees in my study advocated an ‘open borders’ approach, this was rare, and suggests that such an approach currently lacks widespread support. It may be that advocates should attempt to address all of the concerns of Carens, Žizek and Squire by attempting to create identities of solidarity with excluded people and supporting initiatives aimed at addressing global inequality while arguing for the complete removal of immigration controls. In this regard, further research on campaigns such as ‘no one is illegal’ (Cohen et al., 2003) would be very useful.

## **Limitations**

This study should be taken as illustrative rather than representative and therefore has inherent limitations. Three key limitations that could be addressed in future research include: 1) limiting interviews to English; 2) the representativeness of the sample; and 3) the reliance on linguistic data.

One of the limitations was that the interviews with asylum seekers and refugees were undertaken in English. Although many of interviewees had excellent English language abilities, and several had satisfactory English abilities, some of the interviewees had poor English, which made the interviews difficult to conduct and analyse. Moreover, even in cases where the interviewees appeared to have a reasonable level of English, it is difficult to be sure that their use of particular words matches the way in which I have analysed them. It would therefore be useful to conduct further

discursive work that allows people to speak in their first languages. However, this would raise new issues. In particular, either the analyst would need to be fluent in the interviewees' languages, which would be very difficult given the wide variety of languages spoken among asylum seekers and refugees, or it would require the use of translators, which adds additional complexity to the analysis. For this reason, future research could focus on specific language groups or involve a peer research method whereby asylum seekers and refugees were actively involved in conducting and analysing the interviews.

Due to the relatively small sample size, qualitative studies such as this one are generally not considered 'representative' in the traditional sense. However, as argued by Willig (2001), as language is a shared social and cultural phenomenon, the identification of particular discursive constructions suggests that it is available to others and therefore generalisable. In this regard, discursive research should be designed to increase variability rather than focus on representativeness *per se* (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). This is why the study involved a form of non-probability sampling (de Vaus, 1996), whereby people were selected from different organisations and geographic locations. Nevertheless, certain aspects of the selection process may have limited the variability across the samples. With regard to the professionals who were interviewed, as the number of organisations working with asylum seekers and refugees in Glasgow is relatively limited, the sample could be considered satisfactory in terms of reaching a variety of people and organisations in the field. However, the sample of asylum seekers and refugees was relatively limited given the potential diversity in cultural backgrounds and experiences. Moreover, the study only dealt with asylum seekers and refugees resident in the host society; these people tend to have greater means than the large numbers of people who are unable to flee their countries of origin (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002). The potential class difference, as well as obvious differences between those who escape or remain in their countries of origin, mean that the discourses may not generalise. With regard to Scottish locals, their accounts were generally positive, which is in opposition to some previous research on this topic (Lewis, 2005, 2006).

Future discursive research should therefore seek to include a greater variety of participants so as to increase the potential variability in the data.

In line with the general trends of discursive research in psychology, the present study focused solely on linguistic data. Although language is obviously an important aspect of how the social world is structured and understood, ‘discourse’ need not only apply to language (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). As just one example, discursive analysis can be applied to architecture in order to explore the ways in which housing can structure aspects of society and reinforce or challenge particular understandings of the world (e.g., Hook & Vrdoljak, 2002). Given that asylum seekers in the UK are generally forced to live in specific areas, often in deprived areas with poor quality housing (Barclay et al., 2003), this aspect is particularly relevant and further exploration could help to understand other elements of place-identity. Moreover, the movement of (potential) asylum seekers and refugees is limited by immigration systems and the use of detention and deportation. Their experiences therefore extend beyond linguistic constructions to include the bodily practices relating to exclusion and control. It would therefore be useful to develop types of research synthesis, perhaps along the lines used by Durrheim and Dixon (2005), which bring together discursive methods with data relating to the movement and control of populations.

## **Future research**

This research has highlighted three major gaps in research on the integration of asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland the rest of the UK. Specifically, the present study could be significantly developed by: 1) including more naturally occurring data, particularly from asylum seekers and refugees; 2) undertaking evaluations of particular policies, practices and events; 3) using action research.

Potter and Hepburn (2005) argued that interview data is limited and researchers should instead draw on ‘naturalistic’ data. It is my contention that there are many cases where it is appropriate to use qualitative interviews and that the shift to naturalistic data may be one of the reasons why the voices of asylum seekers, refugees and other

minority group members have been missing from much of the discursive research. However, there are some areas where it would be both useful and feasible to gather naturalistic data. For example, although asylum seekers' and refugees' accounts of being victims of violence provided new insight into this phenomenon, it would be useful to analyse the accounts given in more naturalistic settings, such as police interviews. If such research supports the results found in this study – that it is difficult for asylum seekers and refugees to make accusations of racist intent – it would suggest that there is a problem with the way that hate crimes are defined. On the topic of integration more specifically, it could be useful to observe and record Framework for Dialogue meetings, which include professionals, asylum seekers and sometimes Scottish locals. This would provide an opportunity for exploring how members of these different groups interact and employ notions that relate to integration. This involves some challenging practical issues, including recording people speaking a variety of languages and the presence of interpreters, yet the results would provide an important addition to research that is largely reliant on interview data.

Very little research has been undertaken in Scotland or the rest of the UK that actually evaluates the impact of policies and practices in integration. Recently, the Scottish Refugee Council has begun a longitudinal study into integration that should provide some useful information in this regard (Mulvey, 2011). However, research needs to look more specifically at some of the work that is being done to support integration in local communities. For instance, it would be helpful to have evaluations of the Framework for Dialogue groups and integration networks that operate in specific parts of Glasgow. Evaluation would be important for understanding the impact of these interventions as well as working towards guidance on 'best practice' regarding the integration of refugees and asylum seekers. It would be important to take a 'two-way' approach to integration in order to investigate how these initiatives impact on Scottish locals as well as those entering such communities.

Action research provides a way of investigating the topic of integration while also attempting to make a positive impact in communities (Liu, Ng, Gastardo-Conaco & Wong, 2008). It is therefore an ideal approach for both understanding processes related



to integration and developing theory-driven interventions. For instance, it would be worthwhile combining some of the observations from this study with action research projects aimed at addressing issues of integration and the perception of asylum seekers and refugees. Such an approach may be particularly appropriate in relation to cultural events and arts activities, such as the work researched by Khan (2008), whereby asylum seekers actively engaged Scottish members of the local community in creative ways in order to educate them and improve their attitudes. Similarly, it may be worth developing action research projects that attempt to engage across some of the discourses that were evident in the present study in order to improve people's perspectives on refugees and asylum seekers.

## Reflections

Willig (2001) has argued that one of the strengths of qualitative research in psychology is its capacity for 'reflexivity'. More specifically, she described two types of reflexivity: *personal reflexivity*, a process of reflecting on the way that a researcher's personal values, interests and assumptions may have shaped the research and the ways in which the research may have personally affected the researcher, and *epistemological reflexivity*, a process of reflecting on the way that the researcher's methods may have influenced the research findings. In this section I will reflect on these issues.

In relation to personal values and assumptions, in common with some other discursive researchers (e.g., LeCouteur & Augoustinos, 2001; Lynn & Lea, 2003; Verkuyten, 2005a), I began with, and continue to hold, the view that asylum seekers and refugees are subject to a range of discriminatory policies and behaviours. For this reason I see my research as intended to help create positive social change rather than simply describe the world. Inevitably, this has meant that I focused my attention on 'problematic' issues to the exclusion of more 'everyday' topics. Related to this, I approached the topic of integration as an 'issue'. Although I considered the way in which notions of integration may be 'two-way' and include members of the host society (Ager & Strang, 2004a; Castles et al., 2002), my approach may have still been

influenced by ‘an asymmetrical world-view in which only the “migrants” or “foreigners” are perceived as a problem’ (Horner & Weber, 2011, p.140). Hopefully my analysis has helped to explore the discursive aspects of integration and thus lead to approaches that are critical of this asymmetrical assumption. Similarly, my approach often drew on categories relating to people’s nationality and legal status. Although using such categories appears essential for research on this topic, it may be that references to nationality and the use of terms such as ‘asylum seeker’ work to reify these concepts and labels in unhelpful ways. In this regard, my use of such terms should be seen as ‘tools’ necessary for engaging with the topic, rather than support for the accuracy or legitimacy of these categories.

In terms of the personal impact the research has had on me, my knowledge and understanding of issues relating to asylum seekers and refugees has greatly increased, making me feel more strongly that asylum seekers and refugees are treated unfairly in many ways. In addition, I have come to believe that immigration controls in general are a form of structural discrimination that needs to be dismantled and that there needs to be greater effort towards addressing the issues that force people to flee their homes in the first place. The interviews were not simply ‘data’ but rather constituted moments at which I entered a relationship with the ‘interviewees’ and listened to, and was often moved by, their stories. These experiences were often humbling, making me care about their situations as well as reflecting upon my own privileged position in society and the relatively insignificant nature of my own personal dilemmas (such as having to write this thesis!).

In terms of the method, the interviewees may have treated me in a variety of ways that may have affected the way they engaged with the interviews. As a Pakeha New Zealander of Irish descent, some of the interviewees may have seen me as allied with the majority group in Scotland whereas others may have seen me in terms of being a migrant. It is difficult to know how such perceptions may have influenced the results; however this issue needs to be taken into consideration and other research, involving different interviewers, could result in quite different findings. I am also aware that I have not done enough to include the interviewees in the analysis of the data and use of the

research. This is in part this is due to my concerns about their ability and interest in becoming involved in a technical and academic process, as well as my awareness about the extent to which my PhD needs to be my own work. I hope to engage further with the various interviewee groups and find ways of making my research of use to them.

## **Conclusions**

Overall, this thesis has illustrated the usefulness of applying a discursive approach to the study of asylum seekers, refugees and issues related to integration. More specifically, it has addressed gaps in the extant research on this topic by providing detailed analysis of the rhetorical and social functions of interview data from asylum seekers, refugees, those who work to support them and Scottish locals who live in the areas where asylum seekers tend to be housed. The results illustrated that notions of place and identity are closely linked to arguments relating to the presence of asylum seekers and refugees, so that constructions of place are constitutive of their identities. The analysis also illustrated the usefulness of taking a discursive approach in relation to integration and intercultural contact, particularly highlighting the issues asylum seekers and refugees may face in making accusations of racism, even in cases of violence, and ways that particular constructions of integration imply responsibilities among asylum seekers and other members of the local community. Finally, the analysis demonstrated that harsh asylum policies may be resisted through portraying such policies as inhumane and portraying asylum seekers in humane ways. These findings provide a better understanding of relationships between integration, discourse and identity in the context of asylum, as well as suggesting avenues for creating positive social change. Further research on this topic, particularly the analysis of naturally occurring data from asylum seekers and refugees, evaluation research and action research, should help to build on these findings.

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# Appendix A

## Information and consent form for professionals



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

### ***PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR PROFESSIONALS / VOLUNTEERS***

#### **PROJECT TITLE**

Refugees, identity and integration

#### **INVITATION**

You are being asked to take part in a research study on the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. The study will focus on the ways in which refugees and asylum seekers are perceived and their levels of contact and engagement with the local community. I am undertaking this research for my PhD in Psychology at the University of Edinburgh. My supervisors are Dr Andy McKinlay (University of Edinburgh) and Dr Chris McVittie (Queen Margaret University). This project has been approved by the Psychology Research Ethics Committee at the University of Edinburgh.

#### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN**

In this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview regarding your experiences of working with asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. In particular, you will be asked about:

- how you came to be involved in work with asylum seekers and refugees;
- your experiences of working with asylum seekers and refugees;
- your knowledge of the level and quality of contact that asylum seekers and refugees have with members of the local community;
- your knowledge of the inclusion asylum seekers and refugees in aspects of society such as education and employment;
- your views on how asylum seekers and refugees are perceived by the local community, the media and wider society;
- what you think could be done to better help asylum seekers and refugees.

In the interview, you will *not* be asked to provide any information that could identify individual refugees or asylum seekers or breach confidentiality agreements with people with whom you have worked.

#### **TIME COMMITMENT**

The interview will take approximately 30-60 minutes, depending on how much you wish to say.

#### **PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS**

You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn or destroyed.



You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you without penalty.

You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered (unless answering these questions would interfere with the study's outcome). If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should ask the researcher before the study begins.

#### **BENEFITS AND RISKS**

There are no known direct benefits or risks for you in this study.

#### **COST, REIMBURSEMENT AND COMPENSATION**

Your participation in this study is voluntary.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY**

No one will link the data you provided to the identifying information you supplied (e.g., name, address, email). The data collected for this study will be presented within the main researcher's PhD thesis, and may be included in published articles and conference presentations. Individual participants will not be identifiable in any of these publications or presentations.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

Dr Andy McKinlay will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time. His contact details are:

E-mail: [e-mail address]

Postal address: [postal address]

If you want to find out about the final results of this study, you should provide contact details to the interviewer or e-mail Steve Kirkwood on [e-mail address].

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

### REFUGEES, IDENTITY AND INTEGRATION

#### PROJECT SUMMARY

You are being asked to take part in a research study on the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. The study will focus on the ways in which refugees and asylum seekers are perceived and their levels of contact and engagement with the local community.

In this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview regarding your experiences of working with asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. In particular, you will be asked about:

- how you came to be involved in work with asylum seekers and refugees;
- your experiences of working with asylum seekers and refugees;
- your knowledge of the level and quality of contact that asylum seekers and refugees have with members of the local community;
- your knowledge of the inclusion asylum seekers and refugees in aspects of society such as education and employment;
- your views on how asylum seekers and refugees are perceived by the local community, the media and wider society;
- what you think could be done to better help asylum seekers and refugees.

By signing below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, (2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

---

Participant's Name (Printed)\*

---

Participant's signature\*

---

Date

---

Name of person obtaining consent (Printed)

---

Signature of person obtaining consent

*\*Participants wishing to preserve some degree of anonymity may use their initials (from the British Psychological Society Guidelines for Minimal Standards of Ethical Approval in Psychological Research)*

## Appendix B

### Information and consent form for refugees and asylum seekers



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

#### ***PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS / REFUGEES***

##### **PROJECT TITLE**

Refugees, identity and integration

##### **INVITATION**

You are being asked to take part in a research study on the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. The study will focus on the ways in which refugees and asylum seekers are perceived and their levels of contact and engagement with the local community. I am undertaking this research for my PhD in Psychology at the University of Edinburgh. My supervisors are Dr Andy McKinlay (University of Edinburgh) and Dr Chris McVittie (Queen Margaret University). This project has been approved by the Psychology Research Ethics Committee at the University of Edinburgh.

##### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN**

In this study, you will be asked to take part in a one-to-one interview with the researcher regarding your experiences since arriving in the UK. In particular, you will be asked about:

- your level and quality of contact with members of the local community;
- the support you have received from voluntary organisations, members of the local community and other individuals;
- your inclusion in aspects of society such as education and employment;
- your views on how asylum seekers and refugees are perceived by the media and wider society;
- what you think could be done to better help asylum seekers and refugees.

In the interview, you will *not* be asked about your experiences prior to coming to the UK or about your reasons for claiming asylum. However, you should feel free to speak about these if they are relevant to answering the interview questions. The interview will be private and confidential.

##### **TIME COMMITMENT**

The interview will take approximately 30-60 minutes, depending on how much you wish to say.

##### **PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS**

You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn or destroyed. You will still be paid for your contribution.

You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you without penalty.

You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered (unless answering these questions would interfere with the study's outcome). If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should ask the researcher before the study begins.

#### **BENEFITS AND RISKS**

There are no known direct benefits or risks for you in this study. Please note that participation or non-participation in this study will have no bearing on the amount of support you receive from any voluntary organisations nor will it affect any asylum claims you might have.

#### **COST, REIMBURSEMENT AND COMPENSATION**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You will receive £10 cash payment in return for your participation.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY**

No one will link the data you provided to the identifying information you supplied (e.g., name, address, email). The data collected for this study will be presented within the main researcher's PhD thesis, and may be included in published articles and conference presentations. Individual participants will not be identifiable in any of these publications or presentations.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

Dr Andy McKinlay will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time. His contact details are:

E-mail: [e-mail address]

Postal address: [postal address]

If you want to find out about the final results of this study, you should provide contact details to the interviewer or e-mail Steve Kirkwood on [e-mail address]

## **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

### **REFUGEES, IDENTITY AND INTEGRATION**

#### **PROJECT SUMMARY**

You are being asked to take part in a research study on the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. The study will focus on the ways in which refugees and asylum seekers are perceived and their levels of contact and engagement with the local community.

In this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview regarding your experiences since arriving in the UK. In particular, you will be asked about:

- your level and quality of contact with members of the local community;
- the support you have received from voluntary organisations, members of the local community and other individuals;
- your inclusion in aspects of society such as education and employment;
- your views on how asylum seekers and refugees are perceived by the media and wider society;
- what you think could be done to better help asylum seekers and refugees.

By signing below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, (2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

By signing below you also indicate that you have received payment of £10 for the interview.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Name (Printed)\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of person obtaining consent (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person obtaining consent

*\*Participants wishing to preserve some degree of anonymity may use their initials (from the British Psychological Society Guidelines for Minimal Standards of Ethical Approval in Psychological Research)*

# Appendix C

## Information and consent form for Scottish locals



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

### ***PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY***

#### **PROJECT TITLE**

Refugees, identity and integration

#### **INVITATION**

You are being asked to take part in a research study on the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. The study will focus on the ways in which refugees and asylum seekers are perceived and their levels of contact and engagement with the local community. I am undertaking this research for my PhD in Psychology at the University of Edinburgh. My supervisors are Dr Andy McKinlay (University of Edinburgh) and Dr Chris McVittie (Queen Margaret University). This project has been approved by the Psychology Research Ethics Committee at the University of Edinburgh.

#### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN**

In this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview regarding your views on asylum seekers and refugees and experiences of contact with them. In particular, you will be asked about:

- your level of contact with asylum seekers and refugees and experience of this contact;
- your knowledge of the level and quality of contact that asylum seekers and refugees have with members of the local community;
- your knowledge of the inclusion asylum seekers and refugees in aspects of society such as education and employment;
- your views on how asylum seekers and refugees are perceived by the local community, the media and wider society.

#### **TIME COMMITMENT**

The interview will take approximately 30-60 minutes, depending on how much you wish to say.

#### **PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS**

You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn or destroyed. You will still be paid for your contribution.

You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you without penalty.

You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered (unless answering these questions would interfere with the study's outcome). If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should ask the researcher before the study begins.

#### **BENEFITS AND RISKS**

There are no known direct benefits or risks for you in this study.

#### **COST, REIMBURSEMENT AND COMPENSATION**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You will receive £10 cash payment in return for your participation.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY**

No one will link the data you provided to the identifying information you supplied (e.g., name, address, email). The data collected for this study will be presented within the main researcher's PhD thesis, and may be included in published articles and conference presentations. Individual participants will not be identifiable in any of these publications or presentations.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

Dr Andy McKinlay will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time. His contact details are:

E-mail: [e-mail address]

Postal address: [postal address]

If you want to find out about the final results of this study, you should provide contact details to the interviewer or e-mail Steve Kirkwood on [e-mail address].

## **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

### **REFUGEES, IDENTITY AND INTEGRATION**

#### **PROJECT SUMMARY**

You are being asked to take part in a research study on the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. The study will focus on the ways in which refugees and asylum seekers are perceived and their levels of contact and engagement with the local community.

In this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview regarding your views on asylum seekers and refugees and experiences of contact with them. In particular, you will be asked about:

- your level of contact with asylum seekers and refugees and experience of this contact;
- your knowledge of the level and quality of contact that asylum seekers and refugees have with members of the local community;
- your knowledge of the inclusion asylum seekers and refugees in aspects of society such as education and employment;
- your views on how asylum seekers and refugees are perceived by the local community, the media and wider society.

By signing below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, (2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

By signing below you also indicate that you have received payment of £10 for the interview.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Name (Printed)\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of person obtaining consent (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person obtaining consent

*\*Participants wishing to preserve some degree of anonymity may use their initials (from the British Psychological Society Guidelines for Minimal Standards of Ethical Approval in Psychological Research)*



## Appendix D

### Background of professional interviewees\*

No.	Organisation type	Role	Gender	Nationality
1	Employability	Co-ordinator	Male	African
2	Employability	Co-ordinator	Female	English
3	Integration	Co-ordinator	Male	African
4	Integration	Co-ordinator	Female	Scottish
5	Integration	Co-ordinator	Male	English
6	Integration	Co-ordinator	Female	Scottish
7	Integration	Co-ordinator	Female	Scottish
8	Integration	Worker	Male	African
9	Integration	Worker	Female	Scottish
10	Integration	Worker	Male	African
11	Support & advocacy	Co-ordinator	Male	Scottish
12	Support & advocacy	Manager	Male	Scottish
13	Support & advocacy	Manager	Male	Scottish
14	Support & advocacy	Team Leader	Male	English
15	Support & advocacy	Team Leader	Male	Scottish
16	Support & advocacy	Officer	Female	Scottish
17	Support & advocacy	Worker	Female	Scottish
	<b>13 Organisations</b>	<b>8 Co-ord., 9 other</b>	<b>10 Male, 7 Female</b>	<b>13 UK, 4 Africa</b>

\*To maintain confidentiality, the 'No.' column does not correspond to interviewee numbers in the body of the thesis.

## Appendix E

### Background of refugee and asylum seeker interviewees\*

No.	Country of origin	Gender	Asylum Status	Time in UK
1	Algeria	Female	Indefinite LR	>10 years
2	Eritrea	Female	Temporary LR	<1 year
3	Eritrea	Male	Refused	8-9 years
4	Gambia	Male	Refused	7-8 years
5	Gambia	Male	Active claim	2-3 years
6	Iran	Male	Temporary LR	3-4 years
7	Iran	Female	Refused	4-5 years
8	Kenya	Male	Active claim	1-2 years
9	Pakistan	Male	Refused	4-5 years
10	Pakistan	Female	Indefinite LR	3-4 years
11	Somalia	Male	Temporary LR	7-8 years
12	Sri Lanka	Male	Indefinite LR	9-10 years
13	Turkey	Female	Indefinite LR	>10 years
14	Uganda	Male	Active claim	1-2 years
15	Zambia	Male	Active claim	8-9 years
	<b>11 Countries</b>	<b>10 Male, 5 Female</b>	<b>7 LR, 8 non-LR</b>	<b>Mean = 6 years</b>

\*To maintain confidentiality, the 'No.' Column does not correspond to interviewee numbers in the body of the thesis. Note that LR stands for 'Leave to remain'. The mean length of time in the UK is approximate.

## Appendix F

### Background of Scottish local interviewees\*

No.	Where living	Gender	Time in area
1	Gorbals	Female	3-5 years
2	Gorbals	Male	3-5 years
3	Gorbals	Male	6-15 years
4	Kennishead	Female	16-30 years
5	Kennishead	Female	16-30 years
6	Kennishead	Female	>30 years
7	Kingsway Court	Female	16-30 years
8	Kingsway Court	Female	16-30 years
9	Toryglen	Female	3-5 years
10	Toryglen	Female	6-15 years
11	Toryglen	Female	16-30 years
12	Toryglen	Male	>30 years
13	Other	Female	N/A
	<b>5 areas</b>	<b>10 Female, 3 Male</b>	<b>Mean = 21 years</b>

\* To maintain confidentiality, the 'No.' Column does not correspond to interviewee numbers in the body of the thesis. Note that the interviewee 13 spent much time in one of the areas where asylum seekers were housed, but did not reside there. The mean length of time people have lived in the area is approximate.

# Appendix G

## Transcription symbols

The symbols used in this thesis have been adapted from Jefferson (2004).

[ ]	Square brackets indicate overlapping speech. They are placed to indicate the position of the overlap.
(0.8)	Numbers in round brackets indicate pauses in seconds (in this case, eight-tenths of a second).
(.)	A full stop in rounded brackets indicates a micro pause (that is, a pause that is too short to time).
right=	Equals signs indicate ‘latching’, where there is no pause between one speaker and another.
<u>never</u>	Underlining indicates stressed words and syllables.
°yeah°	Degree signs indicate quieter speech and whispering.
DIFFICULT	Capitals indicate words that were said loudly.
u::h	Colons indicate elongation of the prior sound; the number of colons indicates the length of the elongation.
((name))	Double rounded brackets indicate actions, describe words that have been removed in order to maintain confidentiality or otherwise include notes from the transcriber.
↑I was↓	Up arrows indicate increased pitch and down arrows indicate decreased pitch.
>I don’t<	‘Greater than’ and ‘less than’ signs enclose speeded up talk.
w-	Hyphens indicate sounds and words that have been cut off.
yeah?	Question marks indicate a ‘questioning’ (i.e., rising) intonation.
heh	Voiced laughter.
cha(h)nge	Laughter within speech is indicated by the letter ‘h’ in round brackets.
hhh	Indicates aspiration (out-breaths).